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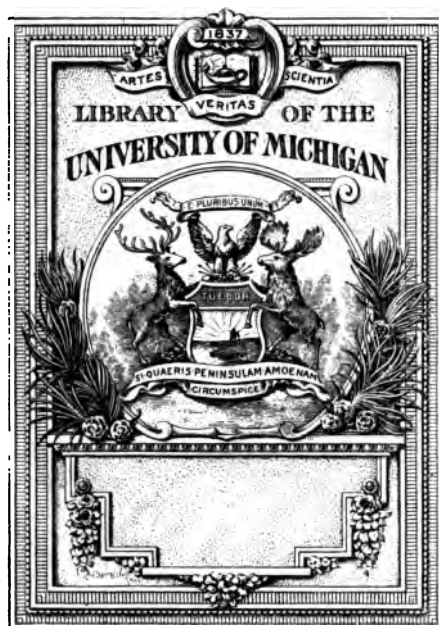
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WHALING IN FARØE.

Driving the Fish into Midvaag Fjord, past the Witch's Finger.

(From a Picture in Herr Müller's possession.)

[Frontispiece.]

THE FARÖE ISLANDS

80739

BY

^{Joseph}
J. RUSSELL-JEAFFRESON, F.R.G.S.

AUTHOR OF

"The Most Northerly Hospital in the World," "The Pathology of the Faröe Islands," "The Ornithology in the Great Frozen Land (F. G. Jackson)," "Three Chapters on Arctic Equipment and Sport in 'The Life of Dr. Fridjoff Nansen,'" "A Visit to Bear or Cherrie Island," "A Kayajk Voyage from the Westerman Islands to Iceland," "Sealing in East Greenland," "Sport in Iceland and Spitzbergen."

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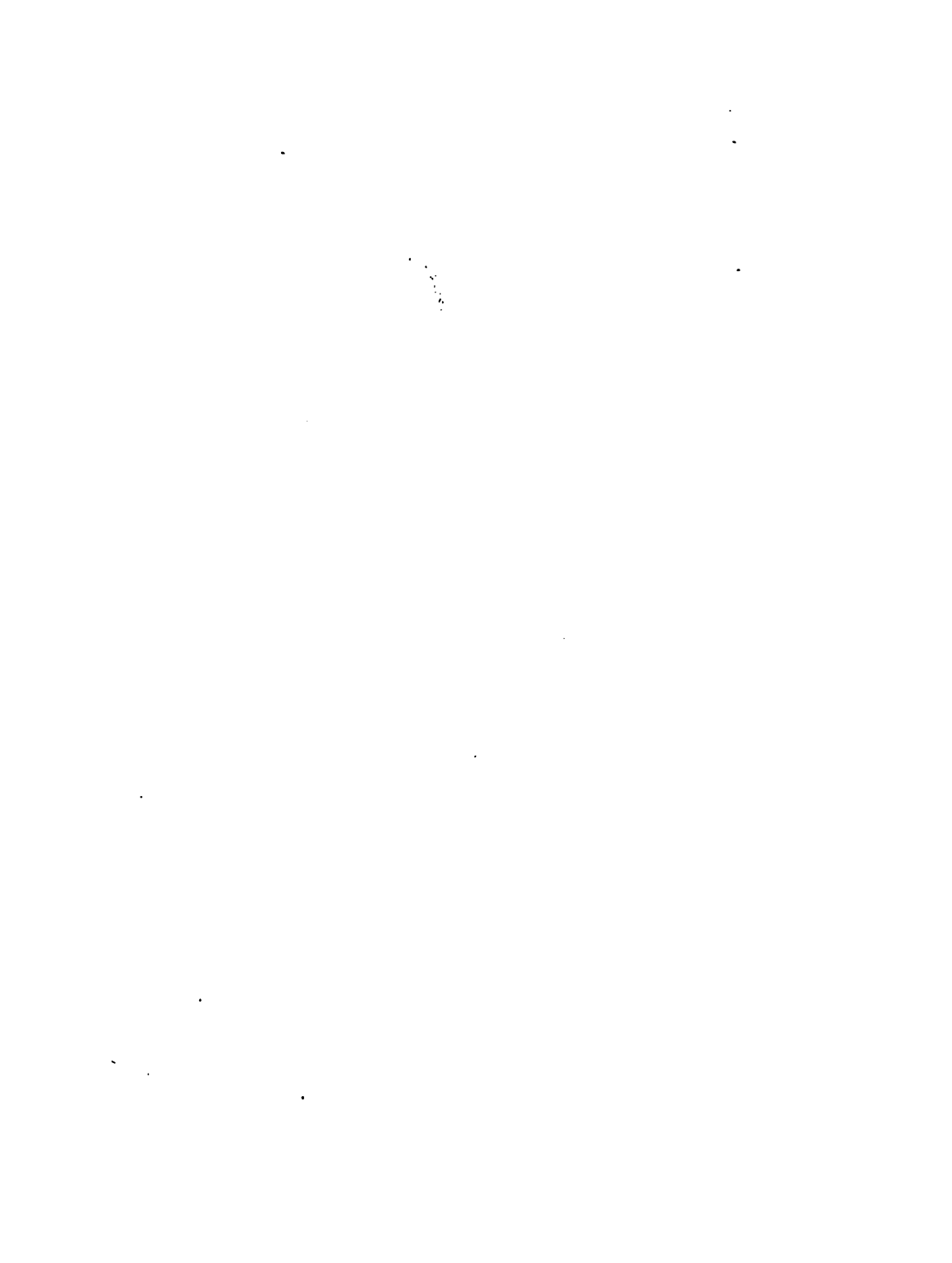
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THE FARÖE ISLANDS

CHAPTER I.

HISTORY OF THE ISLANDS AND CHARACTER OF THE PEOPLE.

THE first time I sighted these interesting yet desolate Islands was in June, 1892, when we arrived in a dense fog off the inhospitable and rocky coast in the Mail Steamer. I was bound North-west, to meet the whaler on which I was destined to make my first acquaintance with the polar ice of the East Greenland and Spitzbergen waters. We called at the three chief trading ports in Faröe, and I was so struck with the Islands, which are seldom visited by the tourists who pass them on their

way to Iceland, that I determined to avail myself of the first opportunity to thoroughly examine them. Accordingly, August, 189-, saw me safe on board the Danish Mail steamer *Laura*, outward bound for a summer's expedition to this curious little colony.

Before I begin the record of my trip, a brief historical account of the Islands and their people will not be deemed out of place. The Faröe Islands form a group of twenty-two in number, seventeen of which are inhabited. They are situated in the North Atlantic, nearly midway between Iceland and Norway, and 200 miles north-west of Shetland. The rocks are mostly basalt or of basalt-like formations. The seas are dangerous and stormy, and the tremendous currents formed by the tides in the narrow creeks and fjords render navigation more or less perilous. The Islands have an area of 510 square miles and a population of about 12,000. Their capital is Thors-havn in the Island of Stromö, with a popula-

tion of 1500. There is only one way to reach the Islands, and that is by the Royal Danish Mail Steamers, which call there on their way from Copenhagen to Iceland from ten to twelve times a year.

The early history of the Farøe Islands is shadowed in the same cloud of mystery that envelops the ancient history of Norway, owing to Norway and Farøe being so closely united in Viking days. The earliest account of Farøe goes back to the time when Harold Harfaager took Norway from his father, Hulda the Black ; but the people of Norway so hated him and his tyrannical rule that they began to emigrate rather than submit to the slavery of this Viking usurper. Some emigrated to Iceland and some stopped half-way at the Farøe Islands. The first settler whose name we know was Grim Kamban, a Norwegian chief, who lived about the year 825 A.D. According to him, he found settled in the southernmost island, called Suderö, a small

colony of Scotch and Irish monks. These pious and simple men did not at all please the fiery-tempered invader, who drove them off, killing the majority of them, and driving the rest to the mountains. From him we learn that they already called the Islands Faröe, or Sheep Islands, because the sheep they had brought with them from their native mountains thrive so exceedingly well. About this time one of the Irish monks who had been driven off by the Viking, wrote about the colony in a work called "De Mensura Orbis Terrae," and spoke of islands he had visited three days' sail north of Scotland, which he calls Faröe, or Ultima Thule. In the same work he tells of the old Norwegian conquest. At this period, too, was enacted the scene which formed the plot of the Faröe Saga, one of the most famous of all the old Scandinavian chronicles.

About the year 800 the noblest Norse family in Faröe was the Goteskeggerne or "Man of

Goter." The head of this family was one Trond, a Viking, a man of great repute for his skill in warfare, and also known as a most unprincipled and villainous personage. By reason of his valour he became ruler over the north part of the Islands. At the same time two famous chiefs, brothers, called Brester and Beine, were ruling over the southern islands. One day Trond, for no known reason, sailed for these Islands and landed on the Little Diamond, where the brother-chiefs lived. Finding them sheep-shearing, and therefore weaponless, whilst he was fully armed, he fell upon them and killed them both. These chiefs had two sons called Sigmund and Tore, aged nine and eleven, who witnessed the cruel murder of their fathers. Tore, it is related, wept bitterly, but Sigmund was of different stuff and did not cry. He only swore to be revenged on his father's murderer, and, child as he was, defied the Viking chief, who would have killed them both on the spot

had not a man in his following, named Bjrane, stood up for them, saying, "The cub of the wolf shows good stuff: I will not see him killed. I will look after him." So Bjrane took the children, and, knowing that Trond would kill them if he got the chance, sent them over to Norway in his warship which was then about to start.

Sigmund, the child thus rescued from destruction, turned out a very famous man in Norway, and, taking after his Viking father, became a renowned hunter-warrior. He was also the best swimmer in Norway except the King. As he grew successful he became the owner of a Viking ship, and some years afterwards set sail for Faröe and took possession of the Islands, subsequently returning to Norway. He was baptized as a Christian, and he tried to convert the Norwegians to this new religion, but they would not receive it; so, in disgust, he set sail for Faröe again, where he found willing ears for his new doctrines, and all the

people of Faröe turned to him except Trond, his father's murderer. But Sigmund, being a powerful chief, forced him to become a Christian much against his will. This compulsory conversion so rankled in the breast of the old Viking Chief that he swore he would murder Sigmund as he had murdered his father.

About this time Sigmund brought over his brother from Norway to Faröe, and the two brothers, throwing aside their old Viking hopes and associations, lived together with an aged follower from the Hebrides on the Big Diamond Island. One night Trond and his followers landed on the Island to take Sigmund's house, but the brethren escaped in the darkness. While jumping a rift in the rocks Sigmund lost his sword, and as it was their only weapon, and seeing that it was impossible to make a stand against the well-armed enemy, they decided that their only course was to swim to Suderö, five English miles distant. The old follower sank half-way, in spite of Sigmund's

aid, and, when half a mile from the place they wished to reach, Tore would have sunk also had not Sigmund carried him on his back. Half dead and exhausted, they arrived at the shore of Suderö. When they were asleep on the rocks after their exertions one of the followers of Trond, called Thorgrime, found and killed them, giving Trond the ring from off Sigmund's finger as a proof. This vile murder of their Christian leader so enraged the Faröese that they caught and hung Thorgrime. Then Trond again assumed the governorship of the Islands; but the Norwegian King, hearing of the murder, took possession of Faröe, making the islanders pay him a yearly tribute. Subjection to Norway continued till the year 1386, when Faröe was ceded to Denmark, and the Islands have belonged to Denmark ever since, except for a short time, in 1808, when England took the islands during the war with that Power.

When collecting notes on the ancient history of Faröe I came across a saga in the old

language, of which the following is a rough translation, given to me by a native school-master. It relates to the birth of one of the early and most famous Norse kings, called Sveere. He was born at Kirkebö, in Stromö, in 1150. The legend runs that Sveere was the son of King Sigurd of Norway, his mother being not the Queen, but a court lady. About this time the Pope published a bull ordering all royal illegitimate children to be put to death on account of the wars of which they were so often the cause. On hearing of this bull the mother, whose name was Gunhild, persuaded her brother, captain of a merchant ship plying between Bergen and the Faröes, to take her over in order to save her child from being killed. Gunhild had another lover in Norway, named Une, a weapon-maker by trade, whom she did not inform of her intended flight. Her brother landed her on the other coast of Stromö, when she made her way to the Bishop of the Island, who was then living at

Kirkebö. To him she applied for employment, representing herself as a poor Norwegian maiden. The Bishop had pity on her and employed her as a dairy-maid. In the meantime she first hid her child at the house of an old man and woman who lived near the Bishop, bribing them to secrecy. During the summer she spent all her time looking after the cows on the mountain.

In the following year there came a Norwegian vessel to Kirkebö bringing her former lover. Gunhild at once recognized him, but he did not at first discover who she was. She had now removed her child to a cave in the mountains. Une presently recognized her, but kept his discovery to himself, and, curious to learn why she had fled, he began to watch her movements. Although it was autumn and all the cows had been brought back to the sheds for the winter, he soon noticed that it was her custom, every day, at a certain hour, to ascend the mountain behind

the town. Determining to find out the cause of her secret visits, he set out one day ahead of her in the same direction. When he had reached nearly to the top of the mountain, great was his surprise, on coming to the face of an almost perpendicular precipice, to find, playing outside a small cave, a fine little boy. Une at once guessed the cause of the secret visits and soon made friends with the child, so that when the mother came up she found the two playing together. This so moved her that she became reconciled to her former sweetheart, and, on his offering to marry her and pretend that the child was his own, she consented and they were made man and wife.

When the child was grown up, the Bishop, who had undertaken his education, wished him to become a minister. Everything was prepared for his ordination, and he was taken to his mother to receive her blessing. She, however, exclaimed that her son was born a prince, and ought not to be a minister, but

should wear a crown. Then said the boy, "If I am really a prince, I will have the crown, as it is my right." His mother then told him the whole story of his birth, and he determined to proceed to Norway, and, if possible, establish his claim.

To this country he went in the disguise of a Faröese priest, giving as his reason for his departure a desire to travel and to see foreign lands. When he arrived in Norway he found it was being ruled by a king called Erling the Crooked, so named on account of his head being on one side. But soon after his arrival Erling retired from the throne, which was taken by his son, called Magnus, while Erling acted as protector and adviser to him. Sveere, seeing that he could not get the crown as easily as he had expected, thought it best to retire to the north of the country, where he hoped to gather a following from among the wilder and less settled tribes.

As he was crossing from the north of Norway

into Sweden he met in the mountains a party of men called Birkebeines (Bark-legged ones), so called because they wore bark gaiters, and, much against his will, they appointed him their leader. They were about seventy in number, and possessed very few weapons. But Sveere so trained these men that they afterwards became his chief and trusted body-guard.

After successfully stirring up the northern tribes, he assembled a large following, and in the year 1184, at his first battle, completely conquered Magnus in a tremendous sea fight in Sogne Fjord, and thus became king, ruling for eighteen years, till the year 1202. He became very famous and did much to improve the country, making roads of great utility, among others, the famous one from Bergen to Vessevangen, in use at the present day. His reign was not undisturbed, for there were several rebellions, but these he successfully put down. His excommunication by the Pope, consequent upon his having driven from Norway the

Bishop of Thorshavn, was one source of trouble, but he had received such an excellent theological education that he was able to set aside the bull and defy the Pope.

He wrote a long history of Norway, and also his autobiography. One of the great events of his reign was his magnificent speech (which is yet recorded) in which he harangued the people in their market place for their drunken habits, contracted from the large consumption of beer from Germany. He died in 1202 after a very successful and prosperous reign. The cave where he was hidden by his mother is still shown, and I have myself visited it. It goes by the name of the "King's Hole." The house where the Bishop lived is said to be still in existence, and is called "Block House," being built of logs after the Canadian fashion.

After Sveere had become King, the Bishop wished to build a cathedral in commemoration of the event at Kirkebö, but it was never properly finished. We had no opportunity of visiting the

ruins, but they are said to be in a wonderful state of preservation, only the roof being wanting.

The religion of the Faröese, like that of the Norwegians and Icelanders, is Lutheran. The Islands are divided into seven large parishes, each of which has its own clergyman or priest, the whole being governed by one head or chief priest. Each of the large parishes is again subdivided into districts or smaller parishes, which have their own separate churches. The clergyman of a parish has to do duty in each of his churches on Sundays in rotation, and consequently the villagers in the districts only get service in their own church at intervals of several weeks. This accounts for the pretty sight often to be witnessed on a fine summer's Sunday morning, when a procession of boats may be observed going from one fjord to another, full of gaily dressed islanders, all in their best costumes, on their way to church. I must say I have

noticed that in the small country districts the congregation consists chiefly of women.

The original religion of the Faröese was Roman Catholic; but in the whole of the Islands there is now but a single individual of that faith—an old woman, who lives at a place about three miles from Thorshavn, called Hoyvig. Here she has a special little chapel all to herself, and once a year a Roman Catholic priest is sent over from Denmark to hold communion with her. After my recent visit I had the pleasure of travelling back with the father, who had been to visit his small congregation. He was a most charming man and an excellent linguist, speaking most modern languages, and I had many interesting talks with him about the Icelanders and their religion, among whom he had formerly done many years' work.

There is a very curious legend told in Faröe explaining the events which brought about the change of creed among the islanders.

According to the story, in or about the year 1538, six Norwegian students were on a pleasure tour from Bergen up to the north coasts of Norway in a small sailing boat. When they came to the promontory called Statland, they encountered a severe easterly gale which drove them out of their course, and they were forced to run before the wind some days till they sighted Farøe. One of them was a theological student named Heine. All through their terrible voyage he kept trying to persuade his companions from drinking some spirits which they had on board, for he knew that if, in their exhausted state, without food, they took the liquor, they would go mad, and thus lose the small chance of safety which still remained to them. But his good advice went unheeded, and, off the coast of Farøe, his companions lost their senses from the effect of the drink and want of food, and caused the boat to capsize, with the result that he alone was saved out of all the crew

and thrown up on to the rocks at Husevig in Sandö.

He was picked up in the morning, more dead than alive, by a girl called Helaborg, the daughter of a fisherman there. According to the legend this young damsel had a dream the previous night. She fancied that when walking along the shore she saw six keys tied together. One of them was very bright, but the others were dull and rusted. She went to her grandmother, who was one of the wise women, and asked her the interpretation of the dream. The grandmother replied that the six keys were the six young men who were in the boat, that the rusty ones were the five who were drowned, and the silver key represented the one who would be saved and was destined to become her husband. And so it happened. Heine was taken into the house of her father, the fisherman, where he was nursed; the girl fell in love with him, and they were married. Afterwards he became

a preacher and spread the Protestant faith all over the Islands, and before his death he had thoroughly put down the Roman Catholic religion and abolished the bishopric. From that day there has never been a bishop in Farøe. Heine lived and died in Osterö and received the Farøe cognomen of "Harveke," which means in Farøese "One that comes driven over the sea."

His son, who was called Magnus Heine-son, became a famous and brave defender of his native islands, defeating the smugglers that at that time harassed Farøe. For the purpose of this defence he built the first fort at Thorshavn, which was situated in exactly the same place as the one now in existence.

He ended his romantic career in rather an ignominious fashion, being hanged in Copenhagen on a charge of piracy, for having taken and sold an English ship. After he had been dead some years the real author of this deed,

the very man who had made the charge against him, was discovered and executed, while the body of Magnus was exhumed, and re-buried in great state in Copenhagen, where a monument, with an inscription telling the story, may be seen at the present day.

As to education on the Islands I am told that great improvements have recently been effected. Certainly the Danish Government has built magnificent school-houses, and the large private school, carried on by Mr. Bergh, the English Vice-Consul, for the children of those who can afford to pay for their education, leaves nothing to be desired. In the Government school the pupils are taught all the ordinary rudimentary subjects in Danish, and English is also included, this branch of study proving of great value to them, for when the boys grow up they are able to take positions as fishermen and sailors in British ships, thus earning far better wages than they otherwise could have hoped for.

This account of the Islands would be incomplete without a word or two on the character of their people, which attracts notice on account of the strange mixture it displays. The islanders are eminently moral, strictly honest, and very truthful, but they have one peculiarity, and that is that they are pessimists of the most pronounced type. In all the affairs of life, they invariably look on the dark side of things, and many amusing instances of this peculiarity I can call to mind. If you are going out fishing you will meet, without a doubt, two or three people who will inform you that, although they wish you the best luck, yet it was exactly a day like the present one when they last went out and returned empty-handed. Supposing you have resolved on taking a boat home across the fjord, with almost a stern wind blowing, your boatman—should you ask him—will inform you with the gravest possible face, that if the wind will hold up till you get back, you may possibly be

able to make the mouth of the fjord without having to tack.

But what appeared to me to be the pre-eminent characteristic of the Faröese is their kind-heartedness and hospitality. I cannot speak too highly of them in this respect, for wherever we went we were received with the greatest kindness imaginable, and in isolated districts where our camp was pitched the farmers and fishermen would put themselves to unnecessary inconvenience to help us, without the least wish for reward—in fact, in many cases to offer such a thing would have been considered an insult. At two or three of our camping grounds, where we had put up the tent for the night, on getting up in the morning we found that some of the natives had paid us an early visit, leaving behind them a pail of clean water and a jug of milk, and going away to avoid being thanked. When writing on the subject of their kindness, I must not omit to mention a little incident which happened in one

of the out-of-the-way places. The natives had evidently noticed that I was going about collecting geological specimens, chipping bits off the surrounding rocks and putting them into my pocket. Accordingly, one of the inhabitants, wishing to perform an act of kindness towards one whom he probably regarded as a mad foreigner who had invaded his native island, arrived the next morning at my camp, bent double under the weight of half a sack of stones, which he had brought me as a present. To what purpose he thought I was going to put them I do not know.

However I thanked him effusively for his present, and, during the night, disposed of them in the lake, to avoid wounding his feelings if he should happen to pass that way when we had gone, and see his gift remaining on the grass where it was left. When I was talking to Herr Müller and praising the kindness of the natives, he said that, far from wishing to receive a present from strangers, they were

formerly in the habit of giving one, and he could remember when he was a boy, about sixty years ago, that on his travels in the northern islands he had often been presented with money and other gifts in the morning by the farmers, with whom he had been staying overnight.

Taking them as a whole, the islanders are exceptionally good-natured, and a fight or quarrel, except under the influence of drink, is nearly unknown. To this indulgence, I am sorry to say, they are much addicted, especially in the large villages. They are naturally lazy, and hate work above everything; but I must say that when they do begin, they will do more in a day than any ordinary people I have come across. As boatmen and fishermen they are unrivalled, and will put to sea in their small rowing boats, for the purpose of going out twenty and even thirty miles to fish, in weather which, one would imagine, no boat of that size could possibly survive.

Their amusements are very few and very primitive, the principal being dancing, and I shall have an opportunity in a later chapter of describing a native dance which I witnessed.

CHAPTER II.

FIRST EXPERIENCES.

Voyage from Scotland—Captain Andreassen—Sport on Suderö—The Little Diamond and its legend—The Great Diamond—Bird-catching and egg-collecting—Native heroism.

HAVING decided on a visit to the Faröe Islands, my first thought was to secure the co-operation of a congenial spirit, for nothing can be less agreeable than to be shut up in a tent with a companion who lacks kindred tastes, especially in a land where there are few people speaking one's own language. So I wrote and secured the services of my old friend and hospital comrade, Mr. Alec Lindsay, whose name is well known in Arctic circles. He is the nephew of the famous whaling adventurer, Captain John Grey, of Peterhead, with whom

he made his *début* as an Arctic traveller in the old *Hope* of Peterhead, and in her reached the 80th parallel to the N.W. of Spitzbergen, or within 600 miles of the Pole. Having secured the companionship of such an experienced traveller and keen sportsman, I felt certain of a successful expedition, and so for the week prior to our departure was very busy getting everything necessary for our trip. This I managed for myself, for when one visits a country where there are no shops or stores, and entrusts the fitting-out and packing to others, one always finds some important and essential article has been left out by accident.

On my arrival in Edinburgh I met Lindsay, and then started to find where the *Laura* was lying. We had been told she was in the docks at Leith, so, loading the cab with about half a ton of luggage, including the tent, stove, cooking utensils, cases of provisions, fishing-rods, gun-cases, rifles, &c., we drove down to the agent's office in Leith, where we were informed

that the *Laura* was not there at all, but was lying at the Mineral Quay, Granton. Off we started on another wild-goose chase, and drove to nearly all the quays between Leith and Granton before we at last discovered our ship. After the usual struggle to put the luggage on board, and the inevitable row with extortionate cabmen, porters, and so on, we finally succeeded in getting our things packed in the hold and made all preparations for starting. But what was our disgust on learning that the ship could not possibly weigh anchor till five in the morning, as the mails from Copenhagen had not yet arrived. We were thus destined to spend our first night on board in port, and it was fortunate that we did not sleep on shore, as some of the party suggested, for the missing mails turned up in the night, and about four in the morning we were awakened by the old familiar sound of the grating of the cable as the anchor was got on deck. Soon the throbbing of the screw

told us that we were starting for our journey north.

Much to our disappointment, the morning broke dull and rainy, so that we saw very little of the beauties of the Firth of Forth ; but after passing the Bell Rock, the clouds broke, the sun came out, and, although the ship was driving into a head sea, everything became much more pleasant. We had a splendid view of the rugged coasts of Forfarshire and Aberdeenshire ; and Lindsay, being a native of this part, was able to point out the lions to the strangers amongst us. About six o'clock in the evening we came abreast of Peterhead, and I was very glad to see this pretty little granite town, having heard from Lindsay and others various yarns about it, its whaling fleet, and the past heroes in this dangerous calling—a class of men unfortunately fast dying out. They are perhaps the finest specimens of sailor-hardihood and pluck the world can produce. This year, I believe, Peterhead has

no ship leaving for the whale-fishing, my friend Mr. Jackson having secured the last of the fleet, the staunch old *Windward*, for his expedition towards the North Pole, *viâ* Franz Joseph Land. Dundee is now the only port in the British Isles that can boast of sending vessels to prosecute this dangerous calling, whereas sixty or a hundred years ago small fleets of whalers were despatched yearly from the Thames, Grimsby, Hull, Newcastle, Montrose, in fact from almost every port on the East Coast; even Liverpool and Bristol had ships in this trade.

But steam-power and the harpoon gun have thinned out or driven far north the right or black whale, which used to swarm in such numbers that the whalers would anchor their vessels in the Spitzbergen fjords, and from their boats kill their huge prey at the mouths of the inlets, drag them ashore, and boil them down in that strange Arctic village on the 80th degree, which they called Smeerenberg or

Blubber Town. I shall have more to say on the subject of whaling later on.

After passing Peterhead we lost, to a great extent, the shelter of the land, with the result that the sea began to run more heavily, and we had an opportunity of seeing what sort of sea-boat the *Laura* was. She proved to be anything but good; she rolled and plunged unmercifully, making as much fuss over a little bit of sea as an empty barge would. When night drew on and we got into the Roost between Orkney and Shetland, she behaved worse than ever. Those lucky people who had berths were comfortable enough, but Lindsay and I, who had only couches, and hard ones at that, had as much as we could do, old sailors though we were, to cling to their slippery surfaces. Thus, from the vessel's bad behaviour and poor accommodation, we called her "The Tank," and a regular tank she was, making more fuss in rolling and pitching than any boat of her size I was ever aboard of, and sending the majority

of her passengers early in the evening to their bunks, from which they never emerged, so far as we could make out, that night. Lindsay and I sat up on deck smoking, chatting to the sailors, watching the moonlight play on the water, and discussing plans for the future, till, at last, we were so tired we turned into those awful, slippery couches. I woke early the next morning and went on deck. It was a lovely day, but a heavy sea was running, and the *Laura* was pitched about like a cork. I got a glimpse of Fair Island about ten o'clock. Not many passengers had turned up on deck, and the few that came up seemed pale, cross, and resentful of any pleasantries that might be offered them. "Sea-sickness is a cruel master."

Towards three o'clock the weather cleared up and the sea dropped, and every one came on deck for coffee, and we had a jolly evening. There were some nice people on board: two ladies, a mother and her daughter, going out to Iceland



THE "LAURA" COMING THROUGH THE ROOST, OUTWARD BOUND.

[To face p. 32.]

with their two brothers to sketch; two Cambridge men who were also going out to Iceland for fishing and shooting. I made the acquaintance of the latter, and they were pleased on finding that I had been to Iceland myself and was able to give some good hints as to the best sporting districts to visit during their short stay. A charming Irish barrister and his wife also sailed with us.

There were among the second-class passengers a lot of Icelanders who were returning from the Icelandic colony at Winnipeg in America, some on a visit to their native island, and one or two who, having made their fortunes, were returning to spend the rest of their lives in their own country, a proceeding that I can hardly understand in an Icelander—but “There’s no place like home.”

These people, with some of whom I had a long talk, seemed to think that their barren island was far more attractive than the sunny shores of Lake Winnipeg. Perhaps the reason may be,

as one of them explained to me, that in Iceland he could get a bottle of native whisky for a shilling, and out West he was charged the same sum for one small drink. In his particular case, perhaps, this consideration weighed more heavily than true patriotism.

We also met on board a Captain Andreasen, who is the owner of three large fishing boats in Faröe, one of them an old American racer which he purchased some years ago. Captain Andreasen and I became great friends, and we have to thank him, not only for much information about his native Islands, but also for the kindest attention during our cruise among them, for he and his brother-in-law, who is the principal pilot in the Islands, were our guides in most of our excursions. Captain Andreasen has the advantage of having served as mate and captain on an English vessel, and therefore speaks English like a native.

Towards night there was great speculation among the passengers as to the chances of

seeing the "loom of the land" before night came on, and many anxious and wistful glances were cast to the nor'ard, where the Islands lay; but we were all forced to go to bed disappointed, as no land appeared. However, from previous experience, having done the voyage before, I was confident we should make it very early the next morning, and I persuaded Lindsay to turn in early as we should have a long and tiring day on the morrow.

August 11th.—When I came on deck at about five or six this morning we were well in sight of the Islands, and I began to recognize the foremost. We sailed for Suderö, the southern island, and called at Trangjiswaag, the chief trading place in the south. This is a picturesque little settlement of typical Faröese houses, half wood and half stone, with turf roofs, lying at the end of a level fjord about four miles long, which, for wildness of scenery, challenges some of the show places of western Norway. As we glide

up to our anchorage opposite the settlement, a dozen boats put off and soon surround us. To anyone who has not visited these latitudes before there is something strikingly picturesque about them. The boats themselves are of a kind seen probably nowhere else in the world. High, double-ended craft, with stem and stern posts standing high above the gunwale at each end, they resemble strongly, in miniature, the old Viking ships, and it is evident that these boats have come down by lineal descent from the ancient craft, as their owners have descended from the bold sea-robbers themselves.

A word as to their occupants, who are now alongside and swarming the deck—big, fierce, hard men, with blue eyes, strong beards, most of them tall and powerfully built, clad in their native dress. This consists of a red-and-blue cloth cap, of the same shape as that worn by the Neapolitan fisherman, brown coat of native cloth, black knickerbockers with gold buttons,



TRANGJYSVAAG, SUDERØ.

[To face p. 36.

side of the fjord past a few scattered huts, and here our first adventure befell us. One of my friends with a gun, who was evidently a very young sportsman, suddenly sighted in the coarse patch at the back of a cottage an old sea-gull, and was about to fire an ounce of lead into the unfortunate bird when I succeeded in arresting his aim, as I saw the poor creature had a string tied to its leg, and was evidently a pet of the children of the farmer living at the cottage, who might not have appreciated the Englishman's eagerness for bloodshed.

On reaching the head of the fjord, our party divided, one half at my advice striking up into the high land on the look-out for hares and ryper, while the other half kept to the marshy ground at the sides of the stream running in the valley, where one of the agents of the steamboat company, so he informed me in Scotland, had killed four hundred snipe two years ago. After walking for about four miles over some of the roughest ground it has ever

been my lot to traverse, I came to the conclusion that my Scotch friend must have killed all the snipe in that district, or that the locality had never recovered from his devastating onslaught. At any rate, not a single snipe did we see, and after my friend had fired a few unsuccessful shots at the grouse, a bird which, judging from its numbers, seems to have taken the place of the slaughtered snipe, we were forced to return to the boat, gameless, and could only hope that greater success had attended the efforts of the mountain party, whose firing in the distance resembled a sham fight. When they returned presently they reported that they had seen no hares, but that the mountains swarmed with curlew, of which they brought a good quantity.

Towards eleven o'clock, all our cargo for this port being discharged, we got under way for the capital, which we hoped to reach about five.

I was very glad to meet amongst the pas-

sengers who came on board here my old friend Mr. Bergh, the English Vice-Consul for the Faröes, a fellow-passenger with me the year before on the boat from Iceland, and I was introduced by him to the wife of the head doctor in Thorshavn, a very charming lady, speaking excellent English.

Soon after leaving the mouth of the fjord, we passed within a few hundred yards of the Little Diamond. This curious island consists of a sheer cone of rock rising out of the sea to the height of thirteen hundred feet. It is uninhabited, except by sheep, of which there are about five hundred. There is a strange legend told of this island. Some years ago one of the fishermen, whose duty it is to attend to the sheep on the rock (which I may here mention is nearly unapproachable by reason of the steepness of its sides, there being only one available spot for landing during nearly three parts of the year), was left by his companions on the island through some unfortunate

accident, after the autumn sheep-shearing, and, owing to the rough weather, it was not possible to land again there till the following May. On reaching the island, however, to their surprise, instead of finding his skeleton, as they had expected, they found their friend hale and hearty.

His story was that on discovering the awkward predicament in which he was placed, he excavated for himself a cave on the sloping sides of the island, and in this he lived, supporting himself chiefly on mutton during the whole of the winter. He also said that each day, on returning from looking after the sheep, he always found a dish of hot food awaiting him, but when he did not go out the food failed to appear. This supply of cooked food continued during the whole of the winter, and when spring came the man determined to lay wait for his mysterious benefactor. To accomplish this he hid himself behind a rock and watched. Soon he saw a beautiful

girl bring the food and put it down in the cave, and retire into a cleft in the rocks. From this he knew that it was one of the Huldafolk or fairies, who live in the rocks.

After leaving the Little Diamond we passed by the Store, or Great, Diamond. This island is remarkable for being the only one which is quite flat on the top. Its population consists of about twenty inhabitants, living at one large farm, and there are about fifty cows and eight hundred sheep. It is a curious island, with perfectly perpendicular cliffs all round it, which in any but the calmest weather render it almost unapproachable, except to natives, maniacs, and members of the Alpine Club. I did not attempt to land here, as I was told that the one path to the summit, which is zig-zag, cut in the rock, is almost unmountable. The farmer who owns the soil makes, for a Faröese, an enormous revenue from the birds and their eggs, which are gathered by the fowlers. They let each other down the cliffs with ropes of

twisted hide, during the nesting season, to collect the eggs of the multitudes of birds which build their nests in the ledges of the rocky and perpendicular walls.

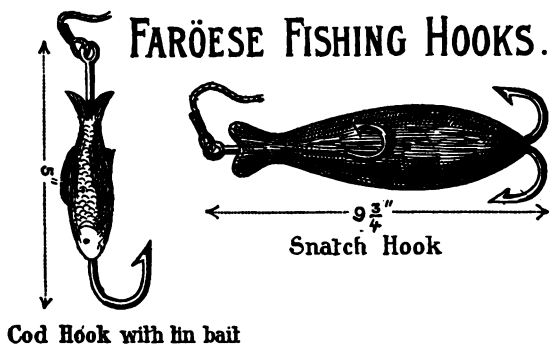
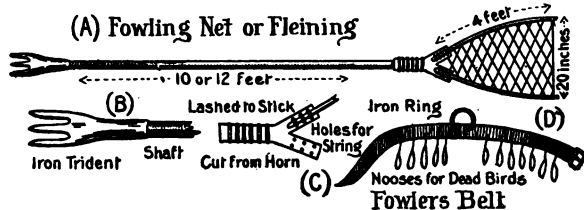
One of the chief sources of livelihood among the men of the Faröes, if they are neither farmers nor fishermen, is bird-catching. This is an extremely dangerous occupation, needing great strength both of muscle and nerve, a steady brain and a sure foot. The rope used is of very stout make, and is often a hundred fathoms in length.

Fowlers generally work in pairs, but sometimes, when there is no projection upon which to fasten the rope at the cliff edge, four men are required. One descends, and the other three support his weight, and obey his commands either to lower him further down or to haul him up. When working in pairs, one man descends, having fastened the rope round some projecting rock or stump upon the summit, while the other man keeps a look-out upon the

rope in order that it may not be frayed out. This is the method of catching the puffin (*Alca arctica*), in Faröese, *londa*, which breeds in countless thousands in the holes of the rocks and cliff-tops, making burrows, like blind rabbit-holes, a foot or so deep. To take these birds, the man is lowered down, armed with a large cod-hook, lashed to a long stick or piece of cane, called in Faröese *lundacrook*. This weapon he thrusts into the burrows, and drags out the squeaking inmate, which he silences by wringing its neck, and the victims are then slung by nooses to the hunter's belt. The bird-hunting begins in May, and lasts a fortnight.

The other method of fowling is by means of a fowling net. This formidable implement, with its handle, is about fourteen or fifteen feet in length, and is shod with a three-pronged fork of iron to assist the hunter in climbing. The fowler scales the cliffs until he comes to a ledge upon which he can stand with freedom

FOWLING IMPLEMENTS



[See p. 256.]

[To face p. 44.]



to use his net. The scared birds fly round the fearless climber—to whom a single slip would mean a horrible death upon the jagged rocks, hundreds of feet below—deafening him with their shrill, discordant cries, and buffeting him with thousands of wings, whilst he, with deadly aim and deliberation, sweeps round his huge net, never missing his victim. Sometimes two, three, or even four birds are caught at one sweep. Their necks are soon twisted, and the bodies form a festoon round the hunter's waist. The birds are either eaten fresh, salted for winter use, or nailed through the beak on to the sides of the houses to dry, as in Iceland, where a whole house-side may often be seen covered with dried fowls. A good hunter may kill from 500 to 1000 birds in a day. The annual catch is about 280,000 puffins, 100,000 looms. The feathers are plucked from the birds and form another source of revenue to the islanders, twenty-five birds giving about one pound of feathers, worth perhaps eight

pence. The feathers of the kittiwake are a trifle more valuable than those of other birds ; and for this reason about 30,000 kittiwakes or rita are killed annually. The loud screaming of this bird when disturbed has suggested a proverb to the Faröese. If a person chatters, and talks a great deal, he or she, as the case may be, is called “ rita ” or “ kittiwake.” Of the total amount of birds caught, ten per cent. are given to the Church as a tithe. The loom is worth one penny and the puffin a halfpenny. In Myggenaes Island alone, owing to the fact that no gun is allowed to be fired there, so that birds flock to the place in enormous numbers, the annual kill is nearly half of the total amount from all the islands.

Egg-collecting is quite as difficult and dangerous a calling as fowling. In this pursuit also the men usually work in couples, with the same exception as to swinging over the cliffs, when three men lower the collector to the various ledges where he secures his booty.

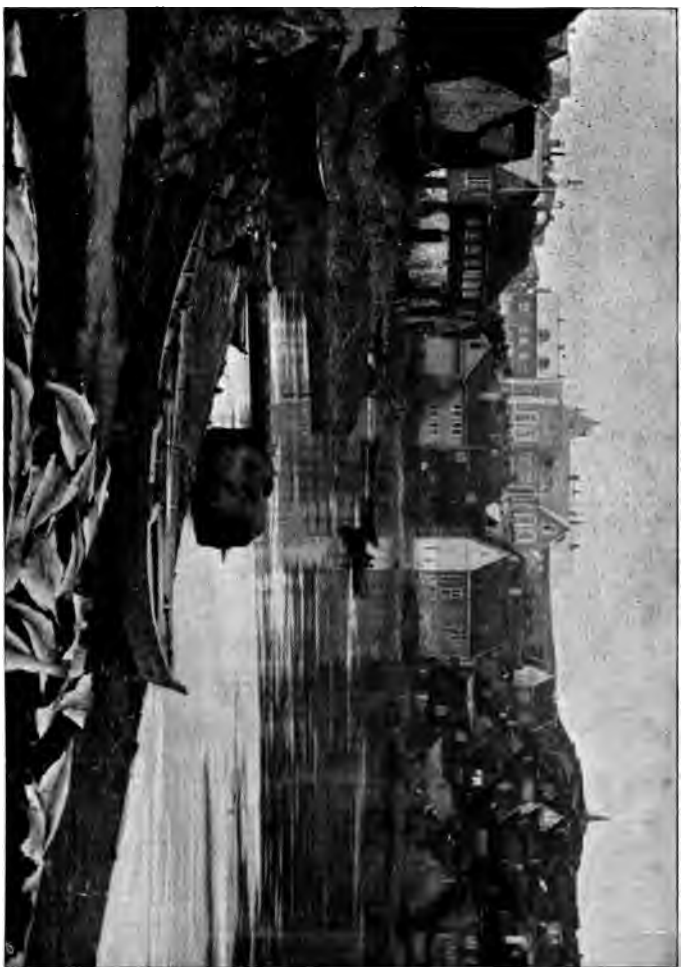
The eggs are principally obtained from the Store Dimon (Big Diamond) Island, which is more resorted to for egg-collecting than for bird-killing. This Store Dimon annually supplies Thorshavn with about 60,000 eggs, which sell at the rate of one kroner for thirty. A great portion of the eggs are preserved for use in the winter.

To show the kindly and chivalric nature of the Faröese, a legend was told us at Thorshavn by the English school teacher. A man and a youth were engaged in bird-catching on the cliffs of Myggenaes, and had ascended an almost precipitous rock. The man, by some means, let fall his climbing pole, thus losing all chance of regaining the bottom in safety. Seeing what had happened, the youth handed his climbing iron to his companion, saying, "Take this ; you are a married man and the father of a family ; your life is of more value than mine." After some hesitation the man consented to the proposal, and descended safely, while the

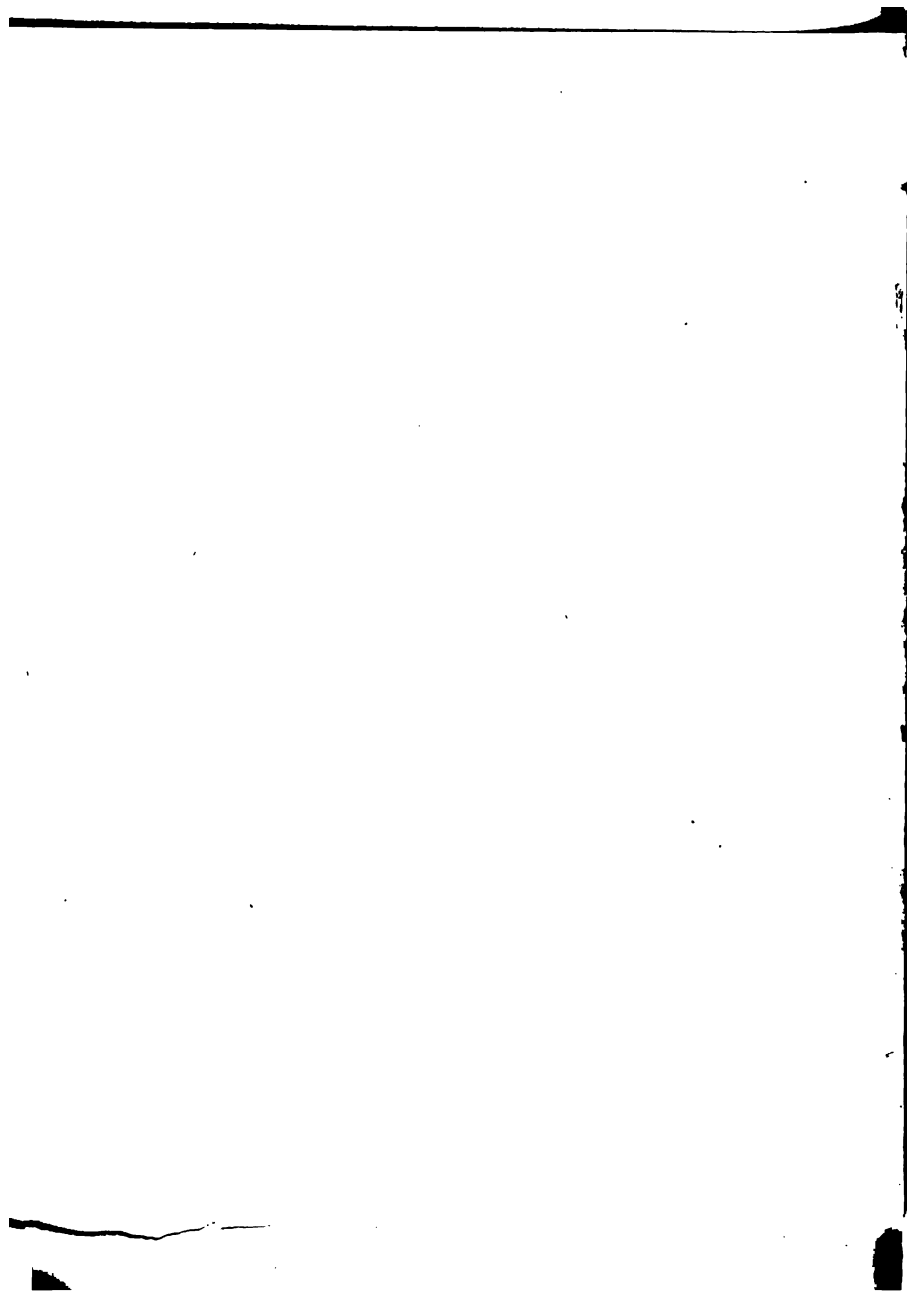
youth, in attempting to reach the bottom, slipped, and was instantly dashed to pieces.

After we left the Big Diamond we steamed into open sea, passing a headland resembling the nose of a whale. Here it was exceedingly rough, but we soon arrived under shelter of the island of Naalsö, which forms a breakwater to the bay in which the capital of the Islands is situated. On the southern cape of Naalsö I noticed workmen were busily constructing a new lighthouse, which, I was told, is sorely needed by the Thorshavn fishing boats in the dark winter evenings.

About four we dropped anchor opposite the fort at Thorshavn. Two years ago, when I visited the Faröes, the only light on the Islands was the one fishing signal-lamp at the port of Thorshavn. Now the Danish Admiralty are engaged erecting suitable lights, and have already placed five on the most prominent capes and settlements on the east side of the Islands.



THORSHAVN FROM THE HARBOUR
(Showing the Governor's House and King Oscar's Monument).



CHAPTER III.

MAKING FRIENDS.

Thorshavn—Pitching the tent—Governor Buchwaldt—
Our first supper—A primitive billiard-table—First
excursion on Stromö—Local Government and Parlia-
mentary representation—We perform our toilet in
public—An evening at Government House.

THORSHAVN is the capital of the Islands, and is, indeed, the only place in them that deserves the name of a town. It occupies two small tracts of land on the right of the large fort, which commands a fine view of the harbour and roadstead. The town is sheltered from the east by the rocky island of Naalsö. On the left the flat land, on which it is built, is ended by the abrupt and sheer cliffs that form the rest of the bay. These cliffs, which rise to a height of about 1000 feet, are the home of innumerable

sea-birds, and from their eggs the inhabitants of Thorshavn reap, during the season, quite a harvest. Behind the town stretches a splendid moor, in appearance much like one of our Scotch moors.

As soon as the ship dropped anchor our fellow-passenger, Captain Andreassen, kindly engaged for me a boat belonging to a friend of his, which happened to be the first to come alongside. After going through the bustle of collecting our half a ton of luggage out of the hundreds of bags and bales which were being hauled up out of the hold by the steam-winch, we filled the boat to such an alarming extent that I should have hesitated about getting into it but for the fear of being laughed at by my friend. We started for the shore, and on reaching it selected a spot at Captain Andreassen's suggestion for our first camp. The place was on a beautiful flat piece of green-sward about 200 yards from the rocky promontory on which the fort is built,

It had the advantage of being sheltered on two sides from the wind by high rocks, while the third side opened up a picturesque view of the bay, presenting to our gaze the red and black steamer, which stood out in strong relief against the dark grey cliffs all round, and the dozen or so little Faröese boats, flying the red-and-white Danish ensign, the whole making up a scene of unusual animation.

As soon as we got the luggage on shore, after a troublesome landing (for we had to drag the things over about fifty yards of piled-up stones which formed the beach), I left Lindsay to put up the tent and get things a little ship-shape, and went to deliver my letter of introduction to the Governor, with which Baron de Bille, the Danish Minister in England, had kindly provided me. Going up to the Governor's house, which I knew by sight from my former visit to Thorshavn, I found that my journey was over roads little resembling those we are accustomed to in England. At first I had to

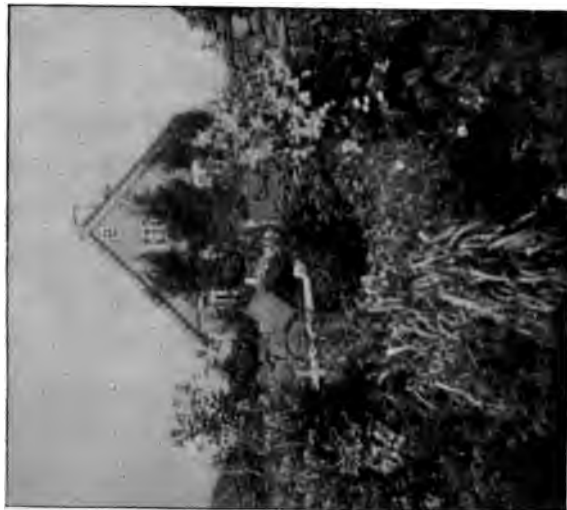
traverse about 300 yards of flat rock, used by the natives for drying split cod, with which it was so plentifully bestrewed that it was difficult to pick one's way without treading on them. The next part of my journey was through the outside of the town, where the road consisted of a sort of cattle path between the huts. Suddenly I emerged into a fine open space, covered with gravel, which ran up to the palings of the Governor's house. The garden in front of the house was spacious, and with its trees, shrubs, and flowering plants looked very beautiful, this being the only place in the island where trees grow. On entering the house I introduced myself to the Governor and presented my letter. I found him to be a most courteous gentleman, speaking sufficient English to render my intercourse with him quite easy. After a few minutes' preliminary conversation, he took me into the drawing-room and introduced me to his wife, whose charming manner, together with her most perfect

knowledge of English, soon made me feel quite at home. They gave me an invitation for Mr. Lindsay and myself to dine with them on the following day, and I apologized to the Governor for having already taken possession of some part of his island with my tent. He kindly gave me a card to show to any of the inhabitants, directing them to allow me freedom of trespass over their lands, and to give me every assistance during my visit.

Returning to the tent, which Lindsay had quickly pitched, I found we had already some visitors, the two 'Varsity men and the Irish barrister and his wife having come to see how we were getting on with our first supper. The meal had been provided by the latter gentleman, who, on seeing an enormous halibut in one of the boats surrounding the ship, had purchased it as provision for the continuation of the voyage, but had kindly insisted on our taking sufficient on shore with us to serve for our first supper, to "obviate," as he put it, "our having

to go to the fishmonger's." All of them stayed to supper, which was a decided success, and they tasted the results of our first attempt at cooking, which they voted *AI*.

It began to rain hard, and some of the visitors returned to the ship ; but the two 'Varsity men remained and smoked with us till the shower was over, when we escorted them down to the *Laura*. On our way we discovered the native hostelry, which, of course, we visited—purely as an experiment, to sample the beverages of the country, namely beer and brandy, both of which turned out to be of excellent quality. The hotel also boasted a billiard-table, which we could not describe in the same flattering terms, but which we proceeded to test. It was evidently not built by Messrs. Burroughs and Watts. In shape it was nearly square ; it had six capacious pockets, and the ball on entering either of them eventually found its way, by some ingenious arrangement, into a box at the spot end of the table, from



THE GARDEN OF GOVERNMENT HOUSE, THORSHAVN
(Showing the Judge's House and the only trees on the Island).
To face p. 5a.



THORSHAVN FROM THE FORT
(Showing the cod-drying).
To face p. 5a.

which it had to be fished out again. The cloth had met with a serious accident, and had been repaired in a very awkward fashion with nails, paint, &c. The cushions were apparently stuffed with hay, which protruded at several places, evidently much favoured by the local Roberts. The balls were somewhat confusing as regards spots. One had two, and the remainder of the four were as plentifully besprinkled as if they had suffered a visitation of small-pox. The tips of the cues were innocent of leather, the woodwork was much worn, and it is needless to add that chalk was an unknown element in the game.

After our exciting game was over we saw our friends on board the boat which was to take them out into the bay, where the steamer was lying. By this time it was pitch-dark, and the return to our tent through the town was not the easiest task, as one required to be possessed of the sight of an owl and the sure-footedness of an Indian chief to avoid the loss of limb, if

not of life. Some of the inhabitants were still about, and wished us "Good-night" in a loud and somewhat startling manner, and for long after we had turned in we heard some of them outside the tent passing remarks upon us, which perhaps it was as well we could not understand.

The next day was Sunday. We rose at about seven and had a bath in the sea, after which we had breakfast, consisting of the remainder of the halibut, bacon, tea, and tinned apricots. We then started off for an excursion round the south-east of the island. After walking through various potato fields and climbing over loose stone-walls we got out into the open moor which stretched right away to the cliff-tops. Along these we walked for three or four miles, when suddenly the whole character of the country changed. Leaving behind us the high cliffs, we came down to a flat, undulating country, with a shingle beach on which a heavy surf was beating. Here I

was able to get some instantaneous photographs of the eider-ducks which were paddling at the edge of the tide. After going round the bay (at the head of which this beach was situated) we again struck out for the high ground, which assumed a grandly rugged aspect, there being very little vegetation of any sort. From the curious formation of the top of the rocks, which looked as if they had been fused or molten—a phenomenon which struck Landt a hundred years ago—it was obvious that their character was basaltic. Then we came again to some fields and a few scattered huts. Wishing to make a short cut back, we enlisted the services of a local farmer who was parading his fields, with a four-foot telescope under his arm and a sheep-dog behind him. This gentleman, who luckily spoke a few words of English, was, so he informed us, the owner of some 500 sheep and twenty cows, which he kindly offered to show us, if we would come several miles over the mountain. But having had already

plenty of exercise, we preferred to return to our tent. The ground we had to get over—a hillside covered with loose stones and fairly precipitous—was not very easy travelling, even in our well-made shooting boots; yet our guide, whose feet were only shod with mocassins and a pair of wooden boots, seemed to find no difficulty in proceeding at an inconceivably rapid pace for a long distance, after showing us the path we were to follow. Our route was an almost imperceptible sheep-track marked by conical cairns of stones about eight feet high, and we were to follow it for several miles further, and then turn to the right up the valley, which our guide assured us would lead us back to Thorshavn. After wandering for some time on the mountains, we got sight at last of the sea, towards which we steered our course, and, tired and hungry, finally arrived at our camp.

After lunch we had several callers at the tent, one of whom was a gentleman to whom I am indebted for a good deal of valuable infor-

mation. This was Herr Djone Isakson, one of the members of Parliament for Thorshavn, with whom I had a most interesting conversation about the government of the Islands. Though under the direct government of Denmark, they have their own local Parliament, and also elect annually two members to the Danish Parliament at Copenhagen. One member is sent to the Landsting, or Upper House. This member is chosen by the Faröese Parliament ; the other, chosen by the votes of the Faröese people, is sent to the Folketing, or Lower House. The Islands themselves are ruled by a Governor, a Sheriff, a Judge, and the Chief Priest, whilst the other six priests act as Syeselemen, or country magistrates, each being a kind of deputy governor over the district.

The Council, or local Parliament, consists of twenty members, eighteen chosen by the people and two nominated by the Governor. Four are elected in Thorshavn, two in

Viderö, six for Osterö (two for the north and four for the south), two for Vaagö, two for Sandö, and two for Suderö. This Court of Parliament holds its sittings annually in Thors-havn. It is opened by prayer and a sermon by the Chief Priest, the priest who comes last to the Islands being the opening preacher. The meeting is held in a curious little wooden house just below the Governor's residence, opposite the new schoolrooms. I attended one of the most stirring debates that had been held for some time, the subject being the demand to be made to the Danish Government for a new steamer (a thing sorely needed) to ply between the Islands for the benefit of their trade. On the occasion of this visit, as I was the guest of the Governor, I had the advantage of having the speeches explained to me, but I must confess that, to a foreigner, the proceedings were somewhat uninteresting.

The interior of the Parliament House consists of one little room, with raised seats for

the Governor, the Sheriff, and the Judge, and a bench for the clerks of these officials. The rest of the members occupy the body of the house, and the orderliness with which they rise to deliver their speeches, and the obedience which they show to the Governor, who acts as a kind of Speaker, might well afford a lesson to many of our English members of Parliament.

Besides the local Parliament there is also a Town Council in Thorshavn for the management of the roads and the government of the schools and charities. Members of the Parliament receive an allowance of two kroner a day from the Government for the six weeks they are in office, whether the business of the session keeps them at the capital as long as that or not. I can only hope that if payment of members is adopted in our Parliament, an equally economical rate may be enforced.

It was now time to wash and dress for our dinner at the Government House, and these operations caused much amusement to a crowd

of about thirty youthful Faröese, who sat in an admiring semicircle round the mouth of the tent at about a distance of thirty feet from us. Every new thing that we produced from our bags caused a murmur of excitement, especially my safety-razor. But the acme of this excitement was reached when Lindsay began to brush his teeth. This was evidently a totally unknown custom among our audience, and one that provoked so much interest that the youngest of the group started off down the road to fetch their elders from a considerable distance, in order that they might witness this strange performance. Long after we were dressed and were sitting smoking our cigarettes the crowd still hung round the encampment, apparently hoping that we should perform some new wonder for their amusement.

At length we set off to the Government House. Among the guests was my old friend Mr. Bergh, the English Vice-Consul. After a

most *recherché* repast, followed by coffee and cigars, we adjourned to the drawing-room, where we found that our host was a most accomplished musician ; not only as a performer, but also as a composer of music he was recognized in Germany, as well as in his native Denmark, as possessing very high merit. Fortunately, my friend Lindsay was also no mean performer on the piano and other instruments, and a bond of sympathy was at once established between him and the musical genius of the island. The ladies were particularly delighted with the English topical songs, at which Lindsay was a great adept. "Linger Longer Loo" and "Tommy Atkins" seemed the chief favourites, and were demanded over and over again.

CHAPTER IV.

SPORT.

Game—Sealing—Singular experience in a seal larder—
Rodents.

Monday, August 13th.—We got up at about 7.30, and cooked breakfast, and then amused ourselves all the morning with writing up our log. The monotony was broken by a visit to the tent from the Governor and the Vice-Consul, who walked down to see how we were getting on. The former begged that if bad weather ensued we would come and stay with him, but it fortunately proved a fine day. Captain Andreasen brought to see us a young schoolmaster, to whom I have already referred, who spoke excellent English and was particularly happy to be asked about the history and

folk-lore of his native Islands. We spent the morning in taking notes from his instructive conversation, and we all lunched together at the tent. After spending an idle afternoon about the camp, we went up to Captain Andreasen's, where we had tea with him and his wife and sister, who, though not knowing much English, found no difficulty in making themselves very agreeable to us. We got out Captain Andreasen's boat and sailed over to the island of Naalsö, and along the coast, south of Thorshavn. We had our guns and were able to secure some specimens of birds. After this enjoyable trip, for it was a beautiful evening, and the scenery of the Islands about here is exceedingly rugged and picturesque, we returned to the camp.

Any one visiting Faröe for sport may at first be disappointed, as it is not quite such a paradise as its sister colony, Iceland, where a man who is prepared to rough it, may, without leave or license, shoot ryper or willow grouse

and wild-fowl, and, in some districts, seals and reindeer, or fish for salmon, trout, and char, to his heart's content, if he will only observe two laws, namely, not to kill game in close-time, and not to shoot in the proclaimed nesting grounds, where no gun may be fired during any part of the year.

Farøe, of course, lacks the reindeer, though I see no reason why, if imported, they should not thrive, as the fields are covered with the particular lichen to which they are most partial, the country is exactly suited to their habits, and the climate admirable. I am sure it would pay to import them into the Islands for sport and domestic uses, as in Lapland. Red-deer might also be imported.

The ryper have had a bad time of it in Farøe, all the original ones having been killed by a succession of bad seasons, and the present birds, the descendants of a lot brought from Greenland and Iceland, are only just beginning to make headway, and are protected from

being killed at all during the next few years, so that they may replenish the Islands. Of the other game-birds to be met with, snipe and ducks form the chief. The former are numerous all over the Islands, and, with a steady dog, you may generally pick up, in the right season, from ten to thirty couple on the marshy edge of most of the small streams which flow through the valleys, the best being that above Trangjisfjord in Suderö, where two hundred have been killed in one day by two guns. Duck are also met with in all the tarns and streams, and the fields swarm with curlew, whimbrell, and oyster-catchers, which give very fair sport and are capital eating, especially the first named, when shot late in August, after they have been feeding in the corn-fields. Hares are fairly numerous in the larger islands, especially Stromö, and you may get from four to a dozen in a day, with a steady dog, on the mountain plateaux in the centre of the Islands. They were imported into Stromö about seventy years ago.

Rabbits are only obtained in one island. A few years ago they were quite a scourge, a Government reward, as in Australia, being given for their skins. Now I believe they are nearly killed out. The farmers in the other islands fear to introduce them, though, if kept in moderation, there is plenty of room in the fields for them, and they would form a welcome addition to the monotonous diet of the islanders. I also see no reason why the English partridge should not thrive in the valleys, as there is plenty of corn and food for them even in winter.

Shooting seals, which used to form a branch of sport in Faröe, has lately quite died out, owing to the ruthless manner in which the animals were killed in all seasons, especially during their breeding-time, when they were tamer. Their capture used to be quite an industry, and in July and August boats would set out for the western coast of the northern islands, which were their chief breeding place,

the neighbourhood abounding in deep clefts and caves called "koupurlatur," or seal-larders, where the animals used to breed. Two boats roped themselves together with a long line, and, as opportunity occurred, one used to dash under the narrow archway of the caves, which hardly stood three feet above the water, the boat outside paying out the line to the boat which was inside.

Generally, at the ends of the caves, there is a sloping beach, or shelves of rock, where the seals lived and bred. Here the boatmen landed and killed their prey with clubs and picks; then, tying their flippers together, they towed them to the entrance, and at a given signal the boat outside, waiting till a wave had entered the cave, and the water in the mouth of the cavern was low, pulled them out. As a rule the crew of the boat had to lie down on the bottom, there being so little space between the surface of the water and the arch. Serious accidents often occurred, and not only boats but lives were

frequently lost during one of these excursions. The two principal varieties of seals killed were (a) *Phoca hispida* (in Faröese, Latu-koupur) ; (b) *Phoca vitulina*—saddleback seal (in Faröese, Styn-koupur).

Other varieties were *Phoca Groenlandica*—Greenland seal (in Faröese, Gronland-koupur), and *Phoca Christate* (in Faröese, Loe-lonen). The latter made its appearance more than once in Skaalefjord, where it spoiled the whale-fishing, and was therefore regarded in the neighbourhood as a sort of evil spirit.

As already mentioned, so ruthlessly have the seals been slaughtered that it does not pay to hunt them at all, and since the cheap rifle has been put into the hands of the islanders a seal no sooner makes its appearance than it is at once either shot or frightened away. It is doubtful therefore if any now breed on the Islands. If they do, it is on the out-of-the-way skerries and inaccessible cliffs near Vaagö, where the current runs so strong that it is

difficult and dangerous, even in smooth weather, to approach them.

The subjoined is an old sealing record kept by Herr Müller :—

Early in the century were taken :—

50	seals in	Suderö
50	" "	Sandö
4	" "	Store Dimon
30	" "	Borö, Svinö
30	" "	Viderö
150	" "	Vaagö, Myggenaes
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Total	314	

The list for 1893 is as follows :—

1	in	Sandö
1	"	Suderö
0	"	Store Dimon
1	"	Borö, Svinö
0	"	Viderö
5	"	Vaagö, Myggenaes
<hr/>		
Total	8	
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We were told of a singular experience which befell one of the islanders in connection with sealing. The story was given us by our boatman, as we were crossing the fjord from Leinum to Vaagö ; the boatman illustrating his tale by

pointing out the identical cave where the adventure took place. Many years ago, when seals were more plentiful than they are now, two boats set out, late in the season, to catch them. Arriving at the "seal-larder," one boat made the entrance with great difficulty, owing to the heavy sea ; but on attempting to back out, it was dashed against the roof of the cave, and immediately went to pieces, throwing her occupants into the sea. With the exception of one unfortunate man, the crew were carried out of the cavern by the back-wash and with difficulty were rescued by their comrades outside. For several hours they cruised about, with the vain hope of finding their unlucky shipmate's body, but were reluctantly forced by the gathering darkness to abandon the search, believing him to be one more victim of the hungry sea.

As usual, the next year, the boats started upon their annual seal-hunt to this "larder." On entering, what was their amazement to

find, on a small rocky elevation at the back of the cavern, the comrade whom they had lost the year before, alive, it is true, but terribly emaciated. At first sight of him, they were filled with terror, believing him to be a spirit ; but they regained courage as he approached them, and then lifted him into the boat and quickly brought him to the light of day. He was in a pitiable condition, being nearly blind, and speaking with great difficulty, owing to his long separation from mankind, and his frame weakened through the ravages of scurvy. On partly recovering he was able to give an account of his sufferings and of his marvellous preservation. When the boat went to pieces, he was washed back by the sea and hurled senseless on to the rocks at the end of the cavern. On regaining consciousness, he saw at once that to attempt to swim out of the cavern was certain death, and, in the hope of rescue, clambered higher up the rocks, out of reach of the sea. His shouts were unheard amid the

roar of the waves, and the poor fellow lingered for twelve months in this awful dungeon, subsisting on the flesh of seals, which he killed with his seal-club, and drinking the water which trickled down the back of the cavern. With the skins of the slain seals, he made a rough bed upon a ledge of rock, out of reach of the devouring sea. From this terrible experience he never entirely recovered.

I learnt that some of the islands—Suderö, Diamond, Kolter, Hestö, and Fuglö—are entirely exempt from the mice-pest. It is said that these islands were in olden times freed from these vermin by the curse of a powerful wizard, and that people whose houses are infested with mice, procure some of the soil from these islands, which is believed to expel the mice from their dwellings.

The “Great Rat” (*Mus Amphibius*) is found in six of the Islands. It was brought by a wreck which drifted to Suderö in 1768, after being ashore on the island of Lewis. The

common rat, brought from Norway, is found on all the Islands.

In Farøe there are no frogs, toads, lizards or snakes.

CHAPTER V.

LEGENDS AND FOLK-LORE.

Herr Müller—The use of the kyack—We remove to Government House—Scenery at Thorshavn—Fishing-smacks of Farøe—Cod-fishing—Folk-lore and legends—Farøese proverbs.

Tuesday, August 14th.—At about ten a.m. the Governor came down to our tent to ask us to dine with him that evening, but we had previously accepted an invitation from the Vice-Consul. We spent the day in paying calls and being introduced to the large merchants and farmers in Thorshavn. The first person on whom we called was Herr Müller, the Postmaster-General of the Islands. Herr Müller is a typical specimen of the islanders, over eighty years of age and of fine physique, a man who has all his life given considerable time to the study of the natural history



HERR MÜLLER.

[To face p. 76.]

and of the industries connected with the Islands. In fact the whole of his energies have been devoted to the improvement of the condition of his fellow-islanders. Besides being Postmaster-General, he holds the important position of Syeseland and is the District Magistrate, disposing of all whales caught in the district of Thorshavn, the equitable division of which requires a man of considerable character and authority to arrange. He has edited several works in Danish, connected with the Islands, and has made his name known by obtaining medals both in the London Fisheries Exhibition of 1883 and in the exhibitions of Copenhagen. I am happy to be able to show our readers a photograph of this Faröese patriot, from which it will be observed that he is the proud possessor of two medals presented to him by the King of Denmark for his labours in connection with his native land. I am indebted to him for much information with regard to the whale-fishing and natural history of Faröe.

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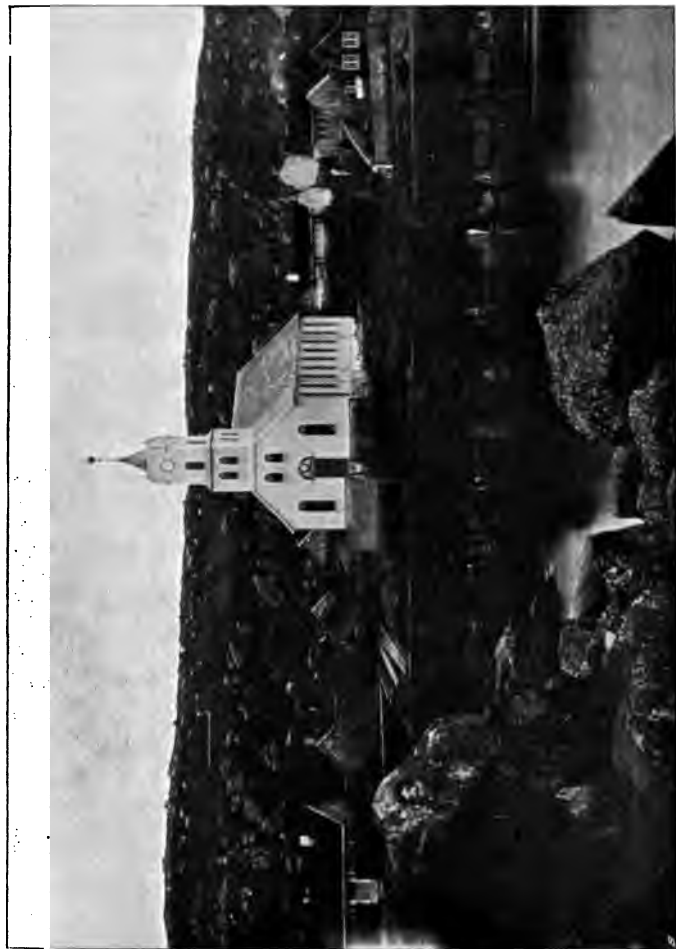
method of handling it, such as turning over and righting himself again with his paddle. He would have parted with the kyack, but it had been somewhat knocked about, so I did not buy it. To show what an adept could do with a kyack, he told us that his brother had accompanied a fisherman as far as fifteen miles from the coast halibut-fishing.

On leaving Mr. Oldsen's store we were met by the sergeant of the Marine Police, who presented Lindsay with a letter from his Excellency, the Governor, insisting that as the weather had become so inclement we should quit our camp and betake ourselves to Government House. We therefore sent our apologies to the Consul, and, thanks to the ever-ready aid of Captain Andreasen, soon transferred our traps to his Excellency's hospitable abode, where we were most warmly greeted by Mrs. Buchwaldt. After dinner we instructed the Governor and his wife in the mysteries of nap, which was a new game to

them, and from which they promised themselves much diversion during the ensuing winter. We must in this respect plead guilty to corrupting the morals of our kind host. Although our camping experiences had been short and pleasant, we were not sorry to find ourselves again in comfortable beds, free from nocturnal visits of spiders and other creatures, which we had been accustomed to find running over us.

Wednesday, 15th.—In the morning we repaired to a beautiful little suite of rooms in the tower, which the Governor had very kindly placed at our disposal, so that we might feel quite at home and entertain any friend we wished to see without feeling that we were disturbing his household. Here we found a tempting breakfast awaiting us. From the windows of this tower, which from its elevation commanded a splendid view of the neighbourhood, a lovely scene lay before us. The sun was just breaking through the clouds over the island of Naalsö on one





THE CHURCH AT THORSHAVN.

side, and on the other the sea was beating in white, angry spray against the iron-bound, threatening shore of the Island of Stromö. At our feet was Thorshavn, with its yellow and brown grass roofs, just catching their autumn tints, and varied here and there by the picturesque red-and-white Danish flag, flying from poles fixed to the gables. At the end of the bay were lying a few of those double-ended boats peculiar to Faröe, and descendants of the Viking craft. In the street just below I could see some of the Faröese, the coloured caps and knickerbockers of the men and the quaint head-dress of the women taking one back to the mythical era of the Vikings. The scenery surpassed imagination, and this charming picture was framed by a margin of rocks, white, not with snow, but with myriads of split cods that were drying there for the sunny markets of Spain and the Levant.

Faröe owns about forty fishing smacks. Of these the finest by far is *The Dauntless*, which,

and two others, *The Pride of Essex* and *The Beautiful Star*, are the property of Captain Andreasen. The Captain is the teacher of navigation at Thorshavn, and his brother-in-law, Christien Christensen, or, to give him his popular sobriquet, "Uncle," is an important personage as chief pilot in the Islands. The Captain's boat, *The Dauntless*, is an old American racing yacht, and, except that a good deal of her masts has been cut off, she looks little altered from the time when she returned from her last cruise. The Captain, however, has all his boats kept in a yacht-like trim, and *The Dauntless* he cherishes as the apple of his eye. His other boats, *The Pride of Essex* and *The Beautiful Star*, are two old English yachts.

The cod-fishing is the principal business in which the smacks of Faröe are engaged. The boats generally leave winter quarters early in March, and stay about two months on their fishing grounds, which are situated round the Island of Rockall. On their return to Faröe

they discharge their cargo, and, after re-fitting and re-victualling, proceed, for the latter half of the summer, to the south and east coast of Iceland, where they continue the cod-fishing. The fish caught are at once split, cleaned, and salted down, and packed in the hold, and in this condition are taken home, where the women finish the process of turning them into stock fish. They are exported to the Roman Catholic ports of Spain and the Mediterranean. To show that this trade is increasing, Captain Andreasen told me that four years ago the whole of Farøe only boasted of fourteen smacks, and in 1894 the number had increased to forty. One reason for this increase may be found in the fact that many of the Grimsby owners have given up sailing smacks in order to start steam-trawlers to keep up with the advance of civilization ; so the poor Farøese fishermen are now able to buy sailing smacks at a far cheaper rate than was formerly the case. On inquiring as to the average number of cod taken, I was

assured that a large boat is considered to do fairly well if she takes two cargoes of fifty tons in a year. A thing which struck me as somewhat peculiar was that, in spite of the quantity of halibut swarming round the Islands, one very seldom sees any brought home. On speaking to the fishermen about this, they told me that, although many were caught during the cod-fishing, none of their boats were fitted up with wells, and as they had no steamers to take them to England in a fresh condition they were unable to find any market whatever for them, so that the best they could do was to exchange them, in the autumn fishing, with the American fishing boats.

Captain Andreasen, who is far ahead of the ordinary Faröese in enterprise and speculation, has been working hard to get the Danish Parliament to give him a modest grant in order to start a small steam trading-boat among the Islands. By this means he would be able to collect all these valuable fish that have been for

so many years wasted (except when used as food by the islanders themselves) and ship them direct to England.

After breakfast my friend the schoolmaster called on me, and I spent the remainder of the morning with him listening to the stories of folk-lore and legends of the Islands which he loved so dearly, and of which he was never tired of speaking. The following are a few of the legends related by the schoolmaster and by other persons during my visit to Farøe.

Mygledahl, in the Island of Kalsö, has a very curious legend attached to it. One day a fisherman, living at this place, was visiting a part of the coast to the southward and happened to notice near one of the little bays some beautiful white seals swimming in the water. They were very shy and disappeared on his approaching them. Thinking how nice it would be to get the skin of one of them, he determined to watch. Aware of the habit amongst seals of landing, he hid himself, and

in the morning the seals came up on to the rocks. But what was his surprise on their landing to see them slip out of their skins and assume the form of very beautiful damsels. On his going near them the girls rushed towards the sealskins which they had left on the rocks, and deftly slipping into them disappeared in the sea, with the exception of one of the most beautiful, who was not quick enough in securing her bathing costume, as the fisherman got between her and it. Picking up the skin, he caught hold of the girl by the wrist and carried her off inland. Shortly afterwards he married her, and they lived together for many years and became the parents of several children. The fisherman, however, took care to lock up the skin his wife had worn in a chest, the key of which he always carried about with him on a string round his neck. But one day, many years afterwards, he happened by chance when starting out fishing to leave the key at home. He thought of the key when he had been at sea

a few hours, and hurriedly put back again, but, to his dismay, only arrived in time to see his wife hastening down to the beach with the skin over her arm. Before he was able to land and stop her she had transformed herself into a seal, which swam towards the boat, and there, rising to the surface, bade him "Farewell," saying that, fond as she had been of him, she could not give up her old life.

One of the most curious beliefs of the peasantry of this district—and I was assured of the truth of it—is that the descendants of the children of the "seal-wife," as she was called, have webbing between their fingers. Indeed I was urged, if I had time to do so, to verify the fact by going to see a young lady at Mygledahl, a governess, who was a great-great-granddaughter of this amphibious heroine. Unfortunately the information came too late to be of service.

Near Mygledahl is a small village called Trolleenaes, which was in olden days supposed

to be a great resort of the trolls, or witches, who dwelt in the Islands. It is not difficult to account for the origin of this superstition. Near this spot are the distinct remains of what must have been a volcanic crater, and perhaps in that remote time, as may be observed to-day in Iceland, many curious rumbling and other subterranean noises were heard, which would give rise to a belief in dwellers underground.

There is also a legend that a plank of the Ark was stranded at this same place (why I do not know), and people wandering on the mountains at night are still occasionally said to fall across it. It is known by the sort of luminous or phosphorescent glow which it emits. Any one lucky enough to come upon it is supposed to enjoy luck in all speculations, and also to be rendered proof against the danger of drowning at sea.

One of the strongest beliefs of the Faröese, common to all northern races, is in the Huldafolk, or dwarfs, who lived in stone. They

were a kind-hearted little folk, always described as dressed in grey, with long beards and pointed caps. They were splendid blacksmiths, and if they settled near any family who were well behaved, good fortune always followed. These little folk issued forth in the night to do a great deal of work for the farmer, shoeing his horses, collecting his sheep from the mountains, and performing other friendly services. If they were spoken ill of by the people, they would remove from their neighbourhood, and with them went all the luck of the house. Many large boulders, split in a peculiar way, were pointed out to me by some of the old inhabitants as the stones in which the Hulda-folk had dwelt. I refrained from doing violence to their superstitions by ascribing the phenomenon to the combined effect of water and frost.

A belief in giants is also deeply rooted, and there are several interesting legends about them. One is connected with the Island of

Myggænaes, which used to be the property of a Faröese called Olaf, the Strong. A giant, called Rise, ordered him to leave the island, as he wished to possess it himself. But Olaf refused and fought with the giant. In the first battle he was worsted, and Rise drove him to the edge of the island. Olaf, being somewhat of a wizard, called upon it to divide, which it did, into two parts. He then felt secure, thinking the giant could not then get at him, as the small piece on which he was standing was separated from the remainder of the island. This broken fragment is now the Island of Holm, which, by some agency, has evidently been separated from Myggænaes in prehistoric times. Rise, however, sprang over the cleft and again gave battle to Olaf, who, this time, got the best of it, bringing the giant to his knees, when he plucked out one of his eyes. The giant now craved for pardon, which Olaf granted, but on condition that the giant should give him three things. To this the giant

agreed, promising that every year there should come to the island, first, a large whale ; second, a large bird ; and third, a large tree. " But," said the giant, " you must never speak evil of these things, or they will never come again."

In due time, next year, the whale arrived, but the people, being greedy, ate too much of it, and were consequently ill. Then they abused the whale, saying it was bad fish. The next year no whale came. The tree also came, and out of it was built a chapel, which shortly afterwards was destroyed by a storm, owing, the people declared, to the badness of the wood ; after that no more trees came. The second gift—a bird—duly appeared ; the inhabitants dared not abuse it for fear of losing it also. So year after year it came, and it was called the sula, and now, curiously enough, this island is the only one of all the Islands on which the sula breed and live, and it is said that whenever a sula is seen on any other island it is only an old one that is about to die, as it never dies on

its own island. Until I visited this island I could not make out what the sula was, though I had heard many descriptions of it. I then discovered it to be the gannet or solan goose, which, as a fact, breeds only on Myggenaes.

When fishing on Sandö I was told a legend by an old fisherman which strongly resembled the story of "Meg and the Witches" from "Tam o' Shanter," which I have often heard in the south of Scotland. At a place near Sandö there was a round hole in the rocks, like a well, which was supposed to be the home of the Trolldæfolk. It was called Girinarhol, which means "Witches' Hole." One of the fishermen living near, bolder than his companions, determined to make an exploration. On a certain day he rode up to the mouth of it on his pony, and there, dismounting, let himself down into the cavern. When he got to the bottom he saw a child playing with two golden apples and some golden knitting pins. On going a little further he saw an old blind

woman who was grinding gold out of a hand-mill. Stepping noiselessly up to her, he collected all the gold he could and put it in his pocket. The old woman, feeling there was no gold coming to the mill, cried out in the Farøe dialect, "Either it is a mouse that grinds or a thief that steals." On hearing the words the man became alarmed and rushed towards the mouth, where he had left his robe.

On the way he passed the child, still playing, and he took from it the apples and knitting pins and struck the child, who began to cry out. The old woman who was grinding heard it, but could not see. However, she cried out aloud and so frightened the man that he clambered up the hole and got on to his pony and rode off as hard as he could. But no sooner had he started than another witch came up the hole and pursued him. She nearly caught him and actually laid hold of the tail of his horse. But at this moment they came in sight of the church, and, as witches lose their

power as soon as they catch sight of a church, she was compelled to relinquish her hold. The pony, however, had tugged so hard that the tail came off in her hand, and the witch ran back with it to the hole. The marks of the pony's feet as it struggled to free itself from the witch's grasp are said still to be seen. I asked the old fisherman to show me the hole, which he averred was still in existence, but on making my request he assured me that a large avalanche had fallen a few years ago, and the entrance was entirely blocked up.

But the Island of Sandö where I heard this legend has its own history. It is said that in olden days a giant tried to throw the island on to the Island of Stromö, but in his exertions he burst himself, and his head fell into the sea, where it became the little island of Troldhoved (Giant's Head) at the northerly point of Sandö. Whether geologists would find in the structure of the rock any confirmation of the tradition I do not pretend to say, but the giant's cranium

at present belongs to a farmer at Kirkebö, and on it he rears some most excellent sheep, of which I had the pleasure of partaking when I was staying at this little village.

When sailing up the Sound between Stromö and Osterö one of the boatmen pointed out to me two enormous rifts in the rock and asked me if I knew the history of them. On my replying in the negative, he told me that in the days of giants there lived on the Island of Stromö, at a place which now bears his name, a man called Kalalerbai. A giant came over from Osterö to fight with him, but Kalalerbai, who was a great warrior, defeated him, and the giant was forced to escape. Having no boat, he jumped back to his own island, and the rifts pointed out to me are the marks of his feet where he landed. I have merely to add that the fjord at this place is six miles wide to explain that the force necessary to carry the giant over this space fully accounts for the dents I saw in the rocks.

The Island of Svinö, too, has its story. This island, which is about five miles long and three miles wide, is said to have had a roaming tendency, floating about in various directions, causing a great deal of trouble to boats in the neighbourhood with which it came into contact. At last a wizard, who lived on the next island, was summoned. He brought over some earth from his own locality and planted it upon Svinö, and forthwith that island anchored itself down opposite the wizard's home. In acknowledgment of this little service he was given the use of the whole of it as a farm for the rest of his life.

Another legend I heard at a place called Bo on Vaagö. The landing there is so bad for fishing boats that the fishermen are compelled to go to the next village in order to embark and disembark. According to tradition a fisherman from Bo arrived one day late at the rendezvous. It was a foggy morning, and, seeing a boat with the crew lying alongside, he

thought it was his own waiting for him, and jumped in. But great was his dismay upon finding that the boat was manned by Huldafolk. It put to sea immediately, and thinking it best to keep quiet, he took his oar and went to work with his strange companions. They stayed out all day fishing, and had almost phenomenal success, he doing his share of the work. As evening drew on, they returned to the coast, where they landed the fisherman and gave him his fair share of fish. When he had jumped ashore he saw that he had left his knife on board. Now, as he knew it was very unlucky, and a sure way to get cursed by the Huldafolk to ask for his knife, he shouted out, "Please give me back my tool that cuts." Whereupon the Huldamen landed and returned his knife, their chief remarking, "As you have been so clever as not to mention the accursed thing you shall have another ration of fish, and shall always have good luck when out fishing." According to the story, this blessing was duly fulfilled.

One of the most curious and deeply-rooted superstitions of the islanders, and one which struck me greatly, is their belief in an animal called the "Niig" (Nike) which they say inhabits some lakes in the Islands. It is described as looking like a beautiful brown pony with a lovely silver mane. It comes out of the water and plays round the people just like a horse. But if any one tries to stroke or pat it, their hand sticks to it, and the animal at once rushes off for the lake, dragging its victim with it into the water, never to be seen again. An old fisherman at Leinumvarten—a lake, by the banks of which we were encamped—who told me the following story, was a firm believer in this animal, and warned me, almost on his knees, to remove the camp from the side of the lake, and seemed really quite upset when I was in the water up to my waist wading. He begged me over and over again to come out before the Niig could catch me.

To corroborate his story he wanted to take

me to a village near at hand, where his grandmother lived, who had a horrible adventure in her youth with the Niig. She and her little child were one day walking by the side of the lake, along which the path from one village to another runs, when a beautiful-looking pony ran up to them, and by its winning manner so attracted the woman's fancy that she put out her hand to pat it. She at once saw what she had done, for the Niig began dragging her towards the lake, and as her little child followed, and caught hold of her hand, the spell was thus imparted to it. As soon as they were in the water and the animal began to drag them under, the child cried out in Faröese, "Niig me up." What it meant to say was "Lift me up." Now, the peculiarity about the Niig is that if called by its name, it loses power over its victim. As the child had lisped out, though unintentionally, the word "Niig," the animal lost all power over them both, and they escaped.

In spite of this wonderful story and the warning received, I am sorry to say that I was unable to make the personal acquaintance of this remarkable animal, and could therefore make no notes on the natural history or habits of this unique addition to the fauna of the northern latitudes.

One amusing little incident I must relate in connection with the Niig. Whilst fishing one day in the Island of Osterö, one of my two native guides and boatmen stayed behind to look after our dinner, and to have a quiet snooze. On returning to pick up our friend in the evening, we were somewhat surprised to find him and the spare rods we had left with him gone. Thereupon the other Faröese at once assumed that the Niig had taken him, and ran to the edge of the lake, calling out for him at the top of his voice. After searching all round the lake, I got tired of the performance and started for home, leaving the other islander still busy looking for his lost companion.



On arriving at the fjord at the other side of the mountain, where our boat had been left, I found the missing one sitting calmly in the stern, and smoking. On explaining to him that his friend feared that he had been taken by the Niig, this gentleman, who knew a little English, remarked with a knowing wink, "Niig no take 'Uncle': 'Uncle' come back to drink whisky."

Before finishing this short account of the folklore of the Islands it is interesting to note the connection that exists between these legends and a great many of our own popular stories and those of continental nations. One can certainly trace a connection between the legend of Melusina and the Mermaids of the Faröese. So strong is the belief of the Faröese in mermaids that I have met one or two natives who were perfectly willing to swear that they themselves had more than once, when out fishing, in the summer evenings, seen these creatures about their boats. Some confessed

that they were frightened, and rowed away; others again had attempted to secure one, but had always failed.

The popular German myths of Bishop Hatto and the Pied Piper of Hamelin are obviously reproduced in the Osterö legend of the mice and rats being decoyed by a magician who, for a certain fixed sum, agreed to rid the Islands of these pests. When he had, by his enchantments, gathered them all into a narrow valley at Tofte in Osterö, he drove them into the sea, with the exception of two rats that lived at Kodlen in the north of the Island. These he forgot, and when the inhabitants refused to pay him with the land they had promised, as a reward for ridding them of their enemies, he ordered the rats from this northern point to come down and increase. They obeyed his command to such an extent that in a few years the inhabitants of the southern part of the Island were obliged to flee over the sea to Stromö. All succeeded in getting away with

the exception of a few who had not boats, and who, as a punishment, were eaten by the rats.

The legends of outlying islands and islands in motion supposed to be occasionally seen and on which a few people have landed, as well as the rat myth above referred to and many others, have been traced with careful research from country to country by Mr. Baring-Gould in his book, "The Curious Myths of the Middle Ages," and the connection between the traditions of such countries throws an instructive light upon the original descent of the races which have inherited them.

I collected and had translated as many of the old Faröese proverbs as I came across. Some of those not frequently in use will no doubt prove interesting to my readers.

"No one knows in the morning whether it will rain in the evening."

"Bad is the blood that is not thicker than water."

"The dog knows the call of his master."

"The crow likes best her own young ones."

"It is difficult to get a lazy boy from a warm bed."

"It is bad to lend clothes to a madman."

"A lazy master has lazy servants."

"Often comes a large fire from a little spark."

"A lazy cow gets dirty water."

"Sheep wool is Faröese gold."

"Little birds lay little eggs."

"Little dogs often have sharp teeth."

"When the mouse is full the flour is nasty."

"Learn the fjord before you cross the stream."

"Better take two birds from the nest than one."

"Big are the intents of people: bigger those of God."

"Few are as a father, but no one as a mother."

"Anyone can fatten a goose in the grain yard of another."

"Reproof never dies."

"Love hides many faults."

"Only fools buy old boats."

"Often is falseness kept under a fair skin."

"As well tell a secret to a woman as to a kittiwake."

"Every bird sings with his own beak."

"Put in your pack what you want to keep."

"The eye of the stranger is watchful."

"Seldom comes a dove from a raven's egg."

"It is easy to overcome the unborn."

CHAPTER VI.

TROUT-FISHING.

Native ponies—A day's fishing—Festive evening at Government House—A Farøese wedding—"Uncle"—Herring fishery—Leinum Lakes—Curlew-shooting—"A superior person"—Havoc amongst the trout.

ON the afternoon of August 15th we called on Mr. Bergh to renew our apologies for having deserted him the night before. Here we met Mr. Philipsen, a Danish gentleman who lived with the consul. Mr. Philipsen gave up a good position in his own country and travelled all over the world, but took such a fancy to the Farøe Islands that he has made his home there. He arranged for us to go fishing the next day, and as I had unfortunately sprained my ankle slightly on some rocky ground, he kindly borrowed a pony from a friend of his to carry me to the scene of operations.

Thursday, 16th.—After breakfast we made an early start for our fishing ground. Captain Andreassen accompanied us; for our guide, who was to take us some six or eight miles over the mountains, could not speak a word of English, and, moreover, the Captain, though he had passed all his life sea-fishing, had never seen any fresh-water fish caught, and was very anxious to be initiated into the mysteries of fly-fishing. Very fortunate it was that I was provided with a pony, as the ground we crossed was of the roughest description. Never even in Norway had I crossed a rougher country.

The ground for the first few miles was undulating, covered with bogs and pieces of boulders. Then we ascended the road to the hills, where we scrambled along dangerous sheep paths running close to the edge of precipices, and right across the face of steep grassy slopes, which were as slippery as glass. Many a time I thought we should have come to grief. The pony was old, and was not quite

equal to some I have ridden in Iceland, though its mother was an Icelandic mare brought over by Captain Andreassen some years before. The latter told me that it was an acknowledged fact that ponies bred from the original Icelandic stock did not long retain the extraordinary sure-footedness for which these animals are so celebrated, although they improve in size and strength under the more favourable climate and food of the Islands.

After this somewhat trying ride we arrived at the lake, which, however, proved too shallow for fishing from the shore, and although I waded in a considerable distance I could find no water deep enough to fish in. Out of it ran a stream much like a Scotch burn, but holding only fish of an inferior size. Even in the pools the fish were still small, and although we took fifty-three, they were of no great size. The number we hooked and lost was still more considerable, for it appears to me that the Faröese trout must have tenderer

mouths than is usual, as I never lost so many fish in proportion to those hooked as I did on these Islands. The lake trout have much harder mouths and are generally better hooked than those in the streams. After fishing down this stream for about three miles, we found that it descended to the sea by a precipitous fall of some thirty or forty feet, which accounts for its holding nothing but burn trout. In the pool below the fall, sea-trout sometimes abound. We took four fish of three pounds or upwards each, bright as bars of silver, and the natives told me that in netting they often get salmon-trout of large size.

Our way home differed very much from our ascent of the morning, as the path to Thors-havn was over the cultivated land which stretches along the top of the cliffs towards the town. We had taken care to arrive home in good time, knowing that the Governor was giving a dinner party. A large party it turned out to be, all the rank and beauty of the little

capital being present, including the judge, with his wife and daughter, the latter of whom was quite the belle of the Islands, a most charming and accomplished young lady of about eighteen, speaking English and French fluently, and a clever musician and singer. The consul and his wife, the sheriff, the elder of the church, the apothecary and his wife, a most fascinating lady, and her unmarried sister were also among the guests. After the entertainment we went round to see many of our lady guests home, being lighted on our way by the rays of the aurora borealis.

The 17th and 18th we spent in exploring the town and its immediate neighbourhood and taking photographs, which, owing to the bad state of the weather, we had not been able to manage previously in any satisfactory manner. On the latter day we also, by invitation, attended a wedding, which did not seem to be a very cheerful ceremonial. The bride was dressed in white, and the bridegroom, a youth, only twenty, was dressed in irreproachable



THE SOUTH HARBOUR OF THORSHAVN (Showing fish-stores, &c.)

[To face p. 110.]

English costume—a frock coat, and a top hat, the latter quite up to date, if not, indeed, a little in advance of the age.

The next morning, at 5.30, we prepared for a long excursion, and were agreeably surprised by the Governor and Mrs. Buchwaldt, who were not by any means given to such early rising, doing us the honour of getting up to see us depart. For our journey we had hired a boat from Christien Christensen, who will henceforth figure in these pages under his sobriquet of “Uncle,” by which name this exceedingly amusing and humorous gentleman is known all over the Islands.

The Captain himself, whose School of Navigation was enjoying its holiday, kindly offered to accompany us and act as our cicerone. This was, of course, a great advantage, as he is on most friendly terms with everybody throughout the whole of the Islands, and his patronage could not fail to secure us a most hearty welcome wherever we called.

We got under way at about six, and made

the inside passage of the island of Hoyvigholm, famous as a breeding place for thousands of Arctic terns, which clouded round us and deafened us with their shrieks as we passed through the strait, and were so fearless that they actually pecked at us as we sailed among them. We now sailed past the cliffs of Kooberg, which are nearly perpendicular, formed of basaltic columns, curiously striated with yellowish-red ferruginous lines running through them about half-way up, while those at the bottom, of a black igneous appearance, are evidently of volcanic origin. The Captain told us (and his story was afterwards corroborated by the doctor) how, during the hay season of that summer, a peasant woman who had collected an enormous bundle of hay to carry on her back, was blown bodily over the edge of the cliffs, hay and all, on to the beach below, a drop of not less than a hundred feet, and that having happily fallen on the bundle, she escaped without injury.

After coasting along for some miles, we came to the village of Hirdenes. It consists of a very few houses and the only remaining Roman Catholic church on the Islands, not very large, but as there is only one person of that belief now to attend the services, it no doubt affords ample accommodation. After leaving this village we passed the mouth of Kalbaks Fjord, one of the fjords for herrings in the Islands.

During the end of July and August the few fishermen remaining on the Islands go in for herring-fishing in a dilatory sort of fashion, as the fish are pretty numerous in one or two places. If more attention were paid to this industry, a good deal might be made out of it. The three chief localities for herring-fishing are Fundings Fjord in Osterö, Kollefjord in Stromö and Skaalefjord in Osterö, at all of which numerous shoals annually appear. The inhabitants catch a good number, which they salt down in barrels, for their own winter use. Judging from such information as I could

gather, I am inclined to think that it would be well worth the while of some enterprising dealer to start a kippering house, and, as wages are so absurdly low, the profits on the exportation to England of the fish (which are exceedingly fine) would be large.

We got a momentary glimpse of the villages of Sund and Kalbak, which are placed at the foot of enormous cliffs, some thousand feet high, so steep indeed that there is no access to these villages except from the sea.

A few miles further on the cliffs are very remarkable, as they come sheer down from the mountain top into the water, a distance of over fifteen hundred feet. A singular formation is to be observed on most of these coasts, and is indeed noticed, more or less, in cliffs of varying heights throughout the Faröe Islands. The faces are often terraced with rough ridges of rock, and green grass grows at an extraordinarily acute angle between the rocky terraces, forming a most beautiful and striking object.

In many of the cliffs I noticed that the terraces were seven in number. Whether there is any connection with successive upheavals that may have taken place, I am not geologist enough to know. It certainly looked as though the ridges had been, so to speak, telescoped upwards in a regular manner.

Opposite the mouth of Kalbaks Fjord we passed a small rocky island covered with eider-ducks, of which there must have been at least a hundred. We then entered Kollefjord. Here, opposite two or three small villages, we passed through a school of porpoises, one of which Lindsay wounded with the rifle. We hunted it for some two or three hours, trying to get it into shallow water, but it eventually escaped to the sea. We sailed up this fjord for a few miles, through lovely scenery, and at length came to a farm at its head. At this farm we left our boat in charge of the owner, together with the heaviest of the baggage, hiring the services of a local guide to carry our

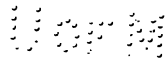
tent and many other impedimenta to the lake shore where we intended to camp.

This guide was, it appears, the postman and parcel-carrier for this part of the Islands. To our surprise he bundled all our traps into a long narrow crate, which he carried on his shoulders, supported by a strap round his forehead. This is the usual Faröese method of carrying heavy weights. It is amazing what loads they will carry in this manner, and, heavy as was our luggage, he started off with it to his destination, some six miles distant, at a pace almost approaching a run, and met us on his return journey before we had got two-thirds of the way up. His feet and legs were bare, and he wore the black breeches and red jersey, so picturesque and so generally affected by these islanders.

The valley from the head of the Fjord to the Leinum Lakes is called the Leinum Valley. It is about two miles in breadth, and much resembles a bit of Scotch moor. We found the usual marsh game in fair abundance and also a

few ryper, which owing to their scarcity we had been asked to refrain from shooting. We managed to pick up a few ducks, which were a welcome addition to our larder. On arriving at the first lake we put together our rods and tried fishing, but met with no sport. We then started off to the third lake, where our camp and equipment had been carried. The path was just a narrow ledge of rock, under an overhanging precipice, and as we approached the shores by this break-neck road a boldly picturesque scene opened out before us. At the sides steep barriers of rock reared themselves, but at either end were valleys, one of which corresponded to that up which we had just climbed, stretching away for a mile or two down to the sea on the opposite side of the island, the lakes being in fact quite on the central summit. Close to the north end of this lake is a farm which is remarkable as being the only one at a distance from the sea.

On reaching the further side of the lake, where we were intending to camp, we were cheered



by the sight of innumerable fish rising all over the surface. Lindsay, Captain Andreasen, and "Uncle" attended to the setting up of the tent whilst I started eagerly to fish. The fish, though not large, were hooked at every cast, and having secured about a score (of which the three largest weighed about two pounds each) I felt obliged to stop and go to assist the others in forming the camp, having fully satisfied myself that there were plenty of fish left, and that the stock was not likely to run out during our stay. One of the fish that I lost must have been a very heavy one, not much under five pounds, but it escaped through the carelessness of a native boy to whom I had unfortunately handed my landing net.

After a few hours more fishing with excellent results, we walked down to the village on the other side of the island, under the guidance of "Uncle." We found it situated on two sides of a rocky cañon through which ran the outlet of the lake. The village reminded me very much

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of the heights in Yorkshire, and consisted of about a dozen cottages scattered on each side of the cañon. We found a nice little store here, and were introduced to some of the inhabitants. After taking refreshments we returned to our tent for the night. Just before turning in we heard many wild-fowl flying about, and I secured an excellent "right and left" at curlew with my little 28-bore. "Uncle" and the Captain, who had been sleeping with a friend of theirs about a mile off, called on us as soon as it was light to take away the game and fish to the farm kitchen, and about nine "Uncle" turned up with an ample and well-cooked breakfast. To-day being Sunday, we decided to stay at the camp, especially as it was raining hard. About twelve o'clock I got out my tackle and an oil-skin coat, and, wading into the lake, I managed to get about half a dozen fish with a minnow, as it was far too rough and windy to use a fly. In the afternoon a gentleman

called upon us, and informed us that our want of success in the lake which we had tried on the previous afternoon was owing to its having been entirely devastated by the ravages of two monster trout of twenty-five and thirty pounds, both of which he had himself caught. We felt all the greater confidence in his veracity when we gathered from his own accounts that wherever he went fishing finny monsters of fabulous size always rewarded his efforts. We offered him the use of our tackle in order that he might exhibit to our eyes some of his prowess, but after looking at it somewhat contemptuously, he declined to try, and left, telling us that if he only had his own tackle with him he would have shown us what could be done in the lake. This class of individual is apparently to be met with in the most remote countries of the world.

For the rest—the rain was so continuous during the evening that we had to turn in very early for the night.

The next morning proved fine, and accord-

ingly, after breakfast, we fished till four o'clock, and secured a large take of fish, many of which were two pounds and upwards. In the course of the three days' fishing I killed over two hundred trout in the third lake, the greater part of them with a fly at the southern end, where the lake falls away into the stream. The three largest fish were caught with a Silver Devon Minnow, fishing from the high rocks into the deep water on the southern side. But in spite of the largeness of the fish, I did not care to risk fishing this part of the lake, as I had to climb along a fearfully dangerous and narrow ledge of rock, overhung by high cliffs of a shaly sort of stone, fragments of which were continually breaking off and slipping into the lake. When I was fishing along this ledge I had two narrow escapes from heavy stones which fell from above. With a small Berthon collapsible boat, a thing that anyone visiting Farøe for fishing might judiciously include in his outfit, excellent sport might be secured in this lake.

Besides the lakes on the Islands of Stromö and Osterö—the latter of which I shall give an account of in another chapter—there are dozens of little mountain tarns, full of small fish, and numberless little streams and rivers running into the sea, at the mouths of which sea-trout abound during the months of June and July, and anyone taking a boat and running round the coast to one of the larger Islands would, I am sure, find fish enough to satisfy even the greediest.

CHAPTER VII.

VAAGÖ.

Vestmanhavn—A stranded trawler—The Witch's Finger and its legend—A rough journey to Vaagö—The trout of Sörvaag water—Busdale Waterfall—Basaltic rocks—Snapshots at wild-fowl—Sande-vaag.

AT four o'clock the Captain and "Uncle" came over the mountains to tell us that they had succeeded in borrowing a boat on the other side to take us to Vestmanhavn. We had received a kind invitation to this place from a merchant, a great friend of our cicerone, who used to take care of his fishing-smacks in the winter.

Vestmanhavn is the most enclosed harbour in the Islands, and the place where the whole of the Faröese fishing fleet is anchored for the winter. It is a circular basin, several square

miles in extent, surrounded by high rocks, and has one small outlet which leads into the strait between Stromö and Vaagö.

On getting down to the south side of the Leinum Valley, where the boat was lying, we had great difficulty in launching her on account of the heavy surf on the small beach. This is one of the few sandy beaches we saw in the Faröes. At last, with the aid of two men, who waded in up to their arm-pits in the water to hold the boat, while we dropped the baggage in from the rocks, and by dint of taking it in turns to jump between the swell of each wave, we succeeded in getting on board. After a couple of miles tacking in the open sea we gained the entrance to the fjord, up which we were able to enjoy a splendid sail. This fjord is especially beautiful, the coasts on each side being excessively steep and lined with lovely verdure. Here and there, nestling in little fjords which branch off from the main body of water, we saw single farmhouses and

tiny villages. Doubtless the latter would have been most interesting to visit if time had only permitted, as they are perhaps some of the most out-of-the-way inhabited places in the whole of the Islands.

After a three hours' sail we made the mouth of Vestmanhavn fjord, one of the most difficult pieces of navigation that we had to deal with, as both sides of the entrance bristle with sunken rocks, and across the narrow opening the current runs at a rate of between nine and ten knots an hour. With the state of the tide it would have been madness to enter it except under such skilled pilotage as we had on board. This large, open basin, which has a circumference of some four miles, forms indeed a most wonderful natural harbour. In it the largest fleet would find most perfect shelter in any weather. As soon as we entered the fjord and opened up the village we noticed that all the houses were provided with flagstuffs, and that they hoisted the Danish flag which

they dipped to us as we rowed up the harbour. From this salute it was evident that our friend the merchant had notified the inhabitants of our intended visit, and on arriving at the landing-stage we received a most hearty welcome from Mr. —, who at once took us to his house and made us quite at home. We lost no time in getting into dry things, for we had been for the last six hours thoroughly drenched to the skin by spray and rain. Afterwards all the ladies came in to make our acquaintance, one of them our host's daughter, being as pretty and agreeable a specimen of womanhood as we had the good fortune to meet with on our tour.

We had hardly settled down in front of the open windows (for it was a beautiful evening) when Captain Andreasen's sailor eyes spied in the twilight a small steamer, making the passage at the end of the fjord. When she got near enough for us to make her out in the fading light she proved to be a steam trawler, and before we could do much more than see

her Captain Andreasen had discovered that she was unacquainted with the passage and was taking a course which would lead her on to some of the sunken rocks and a bank. By the Captain's directions Lindsay and I rushed out, and, jumping into our boat, made the best of our way to her. Though, owing to our shouts, she reversed her engines, we were not in time to prevent her from getting aground. Her captain was most thankful when our friend assured him that by leaving her quiet for two hours she would once more be afloat. In about that time she was out of danger ; but had it not been for our timely exertions she would certainly have been wrecked. When we boarded her the captain was most anxious to show us some hospitality. She turned out to be a Scotch boat, and, what was more important for us, the captain kindly offered to take charge of letters for home. She was starting for Aberdeen the next morning with a full cargo of fish, and the hold was opened for our inspection. It was crammed to the deck

with a magnificent cargo of cod, halibut, and enormous turbot, all caught on the prolific banks of Faröe and Iceland, and carefully stowed away in ice. The vessel had only put in on account of being short of water. On the invitation of the engineer, I looked at her engines, which were kept in beautiful order, and enjoyed a very interesting conversation with him. He was an old Aberdeen sailor, and had often sailed north in whalers.

The next morning we set off on a tour of inspection of the village and its store, and were introduced to many of the chief inhabitants of the place. As the doctor was unfortunately away from home we could only leave our cards on him. Towards the middle of the day we set sail for Leinum again. Our return passage was as rough as had been our outward one, if not rougher; twice we had the wind nearly dead against us, and the landing was as troublesome as had been our embarkation. We returned to our camp, where we intended to stay the

night. I caught about ten fish, and then we had tea, "Uncle" and the Captain having brought up all the rest of our things from the boat.

In the evening I started to fish again, and got about a dozen on a minnow ; but suddenly, and for no accountable reason, I was seized with a wandering spirit, and I came to the camp and proposed to the others, who were sitting round smoking, that we should go somewhere else. The Captain, who, like myself, suffers from an exuberance of animal spirits and restlessness, at once sided with me ; but poor "Uncle," who had done the chief part of the rowing, and carrying the luggage backwards and forwards, thought that we should do better by staying where we were. He was, however, talked over, and after striking camp, we carried all our impedimenta down to the boat again and very soon set sail for Vaagö.

It was not long before I repented of my rashness, for so rough was the sea that I should

have been glad to be landed anywhere on the small rocky island ; but the others were determined to continue the voyage. After sailing under the enormous perpendicular cliffs which drop sheer down into the sea on all these parts of the coasts, we rounded the promontory and suddenly came within view of the lion of the Faröes, the famous Troldkonefingeren, or "Witch's Finger." (See frontispiece.) This is a single pinnacle of rock, rising straight out of the sea to a height of three thousand feet, the last three or four hundred feet forming a needle-like point that runs up from the shoulder. Although, owing to the roughness of the sea, we were in constant danger of being swamped, and many times had to lower the sail and trust only to the oars to keep our boat's head to the enormous rollers which came in straight from the Atlantic at this part, the Captain entertained me with the legend of this pinnacle.

It appears to be utterly inaccessible, but it is stated that in olden times a criminal was

once offered his liberty if he would climb to the top. This he successfully accomplished, and left his mitten at the top as a proof of his deed. His statement being received with incredulity, he started to climb it again to fetch his mitten, on the promise that, if he succeeded in doing so, not only should his life be spared, but his accusers would be held guilty of bearing false witness against him, and punished with death. However, in returning with the mitten, he lost his hold and was precipitated into the sea and killed. There is really no authentic record of the top ever having been reached, although some of the bird-catchers have been known to ascend as far as the shoulder, even during the season of our visit. The rocky cape, of which this is the crowning point, rivals in steepness even the famous North Cape. After rounding the rocks we encountered a most terrific sea, such as none but sailors so experienced and hardy as "Uncle" and the Captain would have dared to meet; but at last we reached the mouth of

another fjord, at the head of which was situated the village of Sandevaag, where we had originally intended to land. The Captain thought we should find better quarters if we went three miles further up this fjord to a place called Mildvaag, where a merchant, a friend of his, resided.

We had now got to a very much flatter shore, the flattest indeed that we ever met with in the Islands, plentifully bestrewed with cornfields and having a homely look. On arriving at the landing-stage quite a crowd, who had witnessed through their telescopes our struggle round the point, came down to welcome us. They were much surprised to find that we were Englishmen making this excursion for pleasure, and they assured us that even in the pursuit of their perilous calling they would not willingly have attempted such a feat. On entering the store, which is the nearest building to the landing-stage, we were met by the chief merchant on the island, who insisted upon our going with

him as his guests. We were thankful for the shelter of a house, for after our rough journey we were almost too exhausted even to pitch our tent. After a welcome dinner, to which the merchant had invited a couple of his friends, who spoke excellent English, to meet us, we spent a convivial evening and then turned in.

Trout-fishing must be regarded as the chief attraction to sportsmen in these picturesque little Islands. Although the fish do not run to the enormous size of the Iceland trout, yet they are, without exception, the gamest fish I ever caught. Nearly all the lakes on the larger Islands simply swarm with trout. The best fishing is undoubtedly in the Sörvaag water, in the Island of Vaagö. It is magnificently situated, the lake lying in a valley flanked on one side by almost inaccessible mountains, and on the other by a gently undulating moor, which is reported at certain seasons of the year to be thick with game, and even at the time of our visit the dykes and ditches teemed with wild-

fowl. The sheet itself is about six miles long and one mile broad, and the fishing of it is something to be remembered for a lifetime. Never shall I forget the day I first threw a line on this lonely water. After a night's rest we set off from the little village of Mildvaag for the lake, and after an easy walk of about two miles, arrived on the scene of operations. Having obtained the loan of a boat for the day, we started fishing. As it was rather stormy weather with a heavy wind blowing I elected to fish with a couple of large Scotch lake flies. At the very first cast I rose a fish, and in a few minutes was fast into a game little trout of about a pound and a half, which was soon netted. After a few more casts I got another and then another for half an hour ; as fast as I could throw out my flies, fresh victims rushed to their doom. But soon it began to rain, and to blow a regular hurricane, and the surface of the lake was more like the open sea. It was absolutely impossible to use flies at all, so

rowing round under shelter of the other side of the lake, I started spinning with a silver Devon. Again the fun was fast and furious, and in the space of a couple of hours I had caught as many fish as we should be able to use, or give away to our friends at the village ; moreover, by this time I was soaked to the skin, and my arms were quite tired with casting, so I decided to return to our camp. When the morning's sport came to be counted up I found it amounted to fifty-three fish, which averaged nearly three pounds apiece. This I only give as an instance of a very moderate day's fishing on this water. I was told by the natives that an Englishman who had fished there three years before, about a month earlier than my visit, had killed over a hundred and fifty large fish in one day. I can only say that the lake was literally alive with fish, the average weight of which was about three pounds ; I never killed one of more than four and a half pounds, or less than eighteen ounces.

I think this lake and the lake at Sandö are about equal as regards the number and size of the fish. There is another small lake on the Island of Vaagö, but I am sorry to say that time did not permit of my fishing it. When talking to a local fisherman, whose word is all I have to go upon, he said that the fish in it were fewer in number, but much larger, and that a man would probably get only about a dozen or twenty fish in a day, but they would run to over seven pounds in weight.

We pulled to shore for lunch, and then there was a break in the clouds, and for an hour we had beautiful sunshine, enabling me to explore this wonderful region. The overflow of the lake runs straight over the face of the cliffs in a sheer fall of about a hundred and sixty feet into the sea. This fall is called the Busdale Waterfall or Busdalifos, and I was informed by our guide that, in spite of its height, with a very high sea, such as comes in the winter, the fierce Atlantic rollers dash clean over into the

1. The first part of the document is a list of names and addresses.



"MOSES

GORILLA

LION.

BEAR.

WITCH'S
HEAD.

THE FACE ROCK, VAACÖ.

[To face p. 137.

end of the lake, causing a distinct saltiness in the water. The face of the cliffs looking out on the sea shows, certainly, a wonderful specimen of weather-beaten rocks, for some of them are beautifully polished, and being of the usual sort of volcanic basalt, so common in Farøe, are studded with the pebbles and stones which are embedded in their substance. Out of them we were able, with the aid of a geological hammer, to chip about half a handful of the small opals with which the surface of some of them quite glistened. I am sorry to say that on our showing them to Mrs. Buchwaldt at Thorshavn, who is an expert in these stones, we were informed that the Farøese opals are almost valueless on account of their smokiness, and possess but little iridescence.

As we were sitting among the rocks, sheltered from the gale, we were able to pick up several wild-fowl, at which we took snap-shots as they passed over our hiding-places. We all started in the boat again to fish up the western shore

of the lake, where, according to the native guide, the best fish were to be found. What we had been told was in no way exaggerated, for at most of the casts a good fish was run. We fished steadily up to about three o'clock, when we were obliged to leave off, owing to a promise to dine at four with our host, who had invited several other merchants from various villages to meet us. We had filled the bottom of the boat with magnificent fish, many over four pounds weight, and we were content. Gamber fish I never wish to hook. It is worthy of note that I had taken the majority of these large fish on a little nine-foot split-cane American rod. As the maker has not put his name on it, and I obtained it through a friend, I am sorry to be unable to record it in these pages, an honour which undoubtedly he deserves, for a more splendid little weapon I never handled. Lindsay was using an eleven-foot half-guinea rod, made by Handcock of High Holborn, which stood the strain in a most

wonderful manner and is not a bit the worse. On crossing the lake to the landing-place, at the suggestion of the guide I put on an extra Silver Devon, heavily weighted, as he said that a larger variety of trout—no doubt *Ferox*—is to be found in the deeper parts of the water, and he had known fish of over sixteen pounds killed there. There is no reason to doubt his statement, although I was unable to capture one of these giants. Amongst the birds that we saw during the day, one looked very much like a white-winged black tern, which has never before been noted as a visitor to the Islands. I was unable to shoot it (although coming within fifteen yards of the boat) as Lindsay had my gun on shore at the time.

When we arrived at our host's house, we laid out our bag for the admiration of the visitors. All the fish were of that peculiar silvery colour common to lake-trout, with the exception of one, over four and a half pounds, which Lindsay caught. This was of

a beautiful golden colour, with red as well as black spots, not unlike trout that I have caught in the higher lakes of Scotland.

After the four o'clock dinner it was so fine that Lindsay and I decided on a stroll, and, accompanied by the Captain, we started for a walk to visit the village of Sandevaag, where a merchant, a great friend of the Captain's, lived. We took with us my little 28-bore, thinking that we might pick up a bird or two on the way, and very glad I was that I brought it with me, for the path to Sandevaag, which is a mere foot track, passes through the cornfields at the edge of the fjord, and as the corn had only been carried a few days, I suggested to Lindsay that we should walk through the stubble on the chance of picking up some game. Never, even on preserved lands, have I met with such sport as we found here. The stubbles were intersected with small watercourses about a hundred yards apart, and the game, consisting of

curlew, whimbrel, duck, oyster-catchers and redshanks, kept rising from two to six birds at a time, every time we crossed a ditch. I succeeded in bagging twelve brace. The execution done by my 28-bore caused the most unbounded admiration on the part of those who saw it, especially of the Captain, who had always chaffed me about bringing out a toy gun.

On arriving at Sandevaag we sent the Captain off to call on the Syeseland to ask permission to shoot on the fore-shore of the village, where we saw a few ducks and some sanderling, as we were now beyond the jurisdiction of the Syeseland of Mildvaag. Before he had gone fifty yards the Captain met the brother of the official in question, who informed us that the magistrate was away and that he was acting in his place, and with the greatest pleasure he gave us permission to shoot in the whole of his district. This was indeed kindness, as his district included a

large area of the whole of the cultivated land surrounding the village, which teemed with game. After picking up a couple of duck and a few more curlew, as the light was waning, we returned with the Captain to call on his friend the merchant, who, with his charming wife, entertained us right hospitably. Here we lingered for a couple of hours and then set out on our homeward journey, and in the whole of my experience of the Islands I do not remember enjoying a more beautiful walk.

As already mentioned, this part of the island is so flat and so carefully cultivated, that, lit up as it was by a lovely harvest moon, which made the scene nearly as light as day, the easiness of the walking would alone have made it quite a memorable event in our tour. Just as we were crossing a little bit of open ground, where a small arm of the main fjord runs into the land, I much astonished my friends, as they did not know my gun was loaded, by killing a couple of ducks out of a flock of about six,

which, put up no doubt by our chattering, flew right across us in the face of the moon, thus affording me a splendidly clear shot. This was a very satisfactory conclusion to one of the most pleasant day's sport that I ever had in my life. When, dog-tired, we turned in for the night, we fought our battles over again with gigantic trout in dreamland.

CHAPTER VIII.

VAAGÖ (*continued*).

Scarcity of snipe—Myggenaes—An egg-collection—
“Uncle’s” sportsmanship—We fish another large lake
—A walk across Vaagö—A bag of curlew and oyster-
catchers—Sailor’s taste for a dish of cormorant—A
lover of medicine—A risky run to Thorshavn—
Naalsö and its only town—Lighthouses and cavern—
Copper ore—We board the *Laura*—Arrival of a
walrus-sloop from the Arctic seas.

THE next morning, although somewhat stiff after the exertions of the previous day, we decided to cross to the opposite side of the island, where the village of Sörvaag is situated, at the end of the fjord. We were told that the distance from Mildvaag to Sörvaag was about seven miles, but walking it the way we went I am certain it was at least ten. The journey was unpleasantly rough, for we had to keep to the bank of the lake, but I got two or three

shots at curlew, and Lindsay missed a hare. On arriving at the end of this hilly chain we descended to the flat ground again at the head of the lake, and crossed a large plateau of marshy bog, where I picked up two or three snipe, some of the few we killed in the Islands, for we were not a little disappointed at finding snipe so rare. I was told by a native that a month earlier many places that we drew blank were swarming with snipe and other game. On leaving the marshy ground we crossed a river running into the lake on a curious bridge consisting of two single dry planks in a rather rotten condition, spanning a yawning chasm, down which the stream flows into the lake. After crossing this uninviting structure, we again struck on to high ground which resembled very much the top of a Scotch moor. Although we tramped over several miles of this ground, we did not see a single head of game. This was due, perhaps, to the excessive dryness of the soil.

On arriving at the top we obtained an exquisite view of the fjord and the village lying at our feet, with an imposing picture of the wonderful island of Myggenaes about three miles off. This island rises, with its sugar-loaf crown, to some fifteen hundred feet above the sea, and its sterile rocks formed a magnificent background to the picture before us. Here, as we were utterly fagged out with our long walk, we stopped to lunch. The meal was constantly interrupted by a pair of inquisitive curlew, to stalk which we kept continually leaving our food, but without success. Lunch over, we descended to the village to see if it would be possible to procure a boat to the Island of Myggenaes, which is particularly difficult of access, there being only one spot at which a landing can be effected. On this occasion the sea was too rough to make any attempt at landing possible, otherwise the Captain was acquainted with the solitary fisherman residing there, and would

have been glad to cross to spend the night with him. Not being able to cross, we contented ourselves with a tour of inspection on our side of the fjord, in the hopes of picking up some sea-fowl, in which we were unsuccessful, although flocks upon flocks literally blackened the estuary of the stream which runs into the fjord. We were not surprised at the sight, for Myggenaes is a "city of refuge" for all the wild-fowl in the Islands, and is a proclaimed nesting-ground, on which no gun may be fired.

On our return to the village we found that the Captain, with his usual ability as quartermaster, had secured for us a sumptuous tea at the house of one of the merchants, who turned out to be a brother-naturalist, and was greatly pleased at my being able to recognize the eggs of the different birds in his collection. He exhibited them in the primitive and dangerous way familiar to the Islands, that is, hanging them on long threads to festoon the walls of his room. For the first time I

acquired full knowledge of the native names of the birds. Though I found in this collection nothing exceedingly rare, it was valuable from the number of eggs of each kind of bird, showing the varieties to which they are subject in their size, spots, markings, &c.

After tea, Lindsay started off ahead with my camera in order to get some snap-shots of this most picturesque village. One amusing incident which occurred *en route* gave me an opportunity of witnessing a feat of sportsmanship on the part of "Uncle." A hare was dimly seen on the sky-line, sitting on a rock, and "Uncle" expressed a desire to be allowed to stalk it. Having lent him my little 28-bore hammerless gun, and explained to him its working and mechanism, he divested himself of his coat and waistcoat, and soon became invisible to us. He must have been equally invisible to the hare, which was never seen to move until a detonation took place in its

direction, and then "Uncle" returned in triumph with his prey.

Our homeward journey was otherwise marked with no special incident, and was therefore a most fatiguing one. Luckily our hostess had the forethought to provide us with a bottle of brandevin, which, as we were very fagged, helped us materially on our way. It was not such a fine evening as the previous one, and the descent of the hill, over which by the advice of "Uncle" we took a short cut, proved very risky, as the moon was at times obscured by the clouds. Exhausted as we all were, our guns strapped to our backs, the greasy slippery slopes, interspersed with loose boulders and slopes of scoriæ, formed a very uncertain and dangerous road, calculated to try the strongest nerves, since a false step would have meant a perpendicular descent of a hundred feet or more.

The next morning, having heard of another large lake on the Island of Vaagö, we decided

to try it, so in spite of the long walk of the previous day we were out and afoot—having already had breakfast—soon after six, to reach this fresh fishing ground. Going up to our old landing-place, we rowed to the head of the Sörvaagvand, and, after crossing the same swamp which we had passed the previous night, followed up the valley in which runs the river between the two lakes. It soon became quite a narrow, dark, and desolate ravine, almost devoid of vegetation, and entirely shut in by the high rocks on each side. We were much disappointed at not seeing more game, as this valley, so the natives informed us, was the great haunt of the wild geese in the breeding season ; but not even a straggler remained.

On reaching the lake, which proved to be a fine stretch of water, some two miles long by about three-quarters of a mile wide, we were again disappointed at finding no boat, as we had rather hoped there would be one. Here the fish, although the numbers were few, were

the largest of any we had seen or caught in the Islands, averaging quite four pounds. With a boat no doubt we should have made a phenomenal catch. As it was, we were obliged to wade ; but the water was so cold that after a couple of hours we thought it more prudent to desist and take a little exercise. So we wandered to the little town of Vigum, where we had an early lunch, it now being about twelve o'clock. Then we walked back by nearly the same route, except that we climbed two mountain passes, so as to cross a chain of almost precipitous hills, which runs like a backbone up the centre of the island. Owing to the exertions of the previous day we took things easily, and did not arrive at the edge of the cultivated land around Mildvaag till nearly six o'clock. "Uncle," our native guide, and the boy spied some curlew, which, as is their wont, had come at dusk to feed among the barley-stalks and stubble. We lent our guns to our escort, while we sat on the hill, smoking our pipes, and

watching the progress of the sportsmen. "Uncle" adopted the same tactics as he had done with regard to the hare, and, absolutely crawling over the ground, never failed to account for one or two of his victims at each discharge. But the other sportsman, who tried simple walking them up in the open, found very unsatisfactory results, as he could not hit them, and was evidently unaccustomed to shoot them flying. They managed to secure four brace, of which "Uncle" claimed at least three.

After this diversion we returned to dinner, and spent most of the evening in packing our things ready for our voyage across to the other island on the next day. Having a lively recollection of our passage to this place, and having received information from a native that by going over a certain mountain pass some dozen miles round we could escape the worst part of our previous route and meet the boat at the other side of the island—where it would

only have to cross an arm of the fjord—we thought discretion the better part of valour, and believed we should get a better opportunity than hitherto of examining the mountain chain of the interior ; Lindsay, however, elected to take the journey by water. Having seen the boat off at about six a.m., and taken a farewell breakfast with our kind host, I started, laden only with my camera and my little 28-bore, for our excursion across the island, under the guidance of a native whom our host had provided.

The first few miles of our journey lay along the road we had traversed the other evening to the village of Sandevaag. Crossing the small stream which runs into the village (where I managed to bag a brace of oyster-catchers flushed among the rushes), we began the ascent by a rather precipitous sheep-path, which seemed to be the road running beside the stream. Having ascended the mountain for about six miles, we reached the crest, and certainly the panorama stretching before us

was quite sufficient recompense for the toil we had gone through. From that high elevation I could see easily the crab-shaped island of Vaagö lying like a map at our feet, with its lakes and streams and little green patches of cultivated land forming a striking contrast to the black volcanic portion of the island. In speaking of volcanic appearances, it must not be understood that there were any signs of recent action such as one sees in Iceland. We observed nothing during the whole of our wanderings that would warrant the notion of any volcanic action within recent years.

Leaving the summit, after a short rest, we began to descend by the bank of another stream which ran down the face of the mountain on the opposite side to the one we had ascended. This stream, which ran through large tracts of bog and marsh, high up on the side of the mountain, seemed to be a great resort for all manner of sea-fowl, and in crossing these bright green patches I was able to bag about eight

brace of curlew and oyster-catchers, with which the place abounded, many of them, from the situation of the ground and the way in which they got up, giving one as pretty a series of shots as the heart of any sportsman could desire. Most of the bag was left under a cairn of stones, in order that the guide might pick them up on his return journey, and take them as a small memento to my late host. As very few of these farmers and merchants use fire-arms, they are thankful for such an addition to their monotonous diet. After a perpendicular descent on the far side to our rendezvous,—a small waterfall which we had noticed on our outward voyage to the Islands,—we found much to our surprise that the boat, which we had not expected for some hours, had already arrived, having this time experienced a most pleasant and smooth passage. So smooth had it been, that they had been able to land at the foot of the Witch's Finger, a feat which, by reason of its exposed position to every breath of

wind and to the violent currents sweeping round the promontory, is very seldom accomplished.

We also found that Lindsay, who had taken my other gun with him, had met with some good sport, but he did not bring with him anything that was at all rare. Amongst his spoil was a huge old cormorant, shot with my small rifle. Its presence in the boat was so objectionable that I at once proposed to throw it overboard; but he naturally wished to have the head and wings as a mark of his prowess, and one of the sailors immediately begged to have the carcase, which he assured us was equal to the flavour of any goose, and a dish very much esteemed by the seamen of the district. I am not very easily upset by any article of diet which may be presented at a pinch, but could not help envying the stomachs of people who can really regard such a bird as a dainty. The mere presence of this fowl in the boat nearly brought about the same unpleasant result as the

action of the waves had done on the occasion of our previous voyage.

An enjoyable sail brought us to our old landing-place at Leinum, where we were entertained with coffee by a farmer in the village. We went on to another farm, where we had left some of our baggage, and again had coffee with an old lady, who had constituted herself a patient of Lindsay's. We had heard from the Captain that she was very fond of medicine of any kind, but, unfortunately, we had at our disposal only half a bottle of Elliman's Embrocation, which I had been using for my sprained ankle. We left it with her, and do not know up to the present time whether it was applied externally or internally, but, whichever may have been the case, the lady expressed herself highly gratified with the result.

On our return walk past the three lakes, after picking up the things we had left at our first camping ground, we again tried the lake we had first visited with such poor success. We

were again quite unsuccessful, and so far verified the statements of the local Ananias. Leaving the lake, we now descended to Kollefjord where we had left our boat. There we held a council of war as to our next destination. I was in favour of running up the narrow fjord to a place called Kvalvig, where I had heard there was an excellent river—in fact the largest in the island—and where we might get some salmon, but alas! when we got to the mouth of the fjord the wind was unfavourable, and the sea far too rough at that time of the evening to attempt taking a run up this dangerous and rock-sprinkled estuary. We were obliged therefore to turn our course towards home, where, after a long and tedious sail, we arrived about eleven o'clock.

We had told Captain Andreassen and "Uncle" that we wished if possible to be home before midnight, to avoid rousing up his Excellency, the Governor, with whom we had promised to stay on our return, and by their

advice Lindsay very pluckily made the passage between the island at Hoyvigholm and the outer skerries. This bit of seamanship seemed to me about the finest and most hazardous I have ever taken part in. Although we had a fair southerly wind, the sea was running terribly high for a small boat. This was partly due to the under-current which runs round this rocky promontory. The passage we proposed to make was about a hundred yards wide, between the precipitous buttress of the head of the island and the jagged rocky pinnacles of the skerries, which only showed their black teeth every few minutes through the snow-white foam. Even the natives, who consider themselves the finest sailors in the world, found that Lindsay had nothing to learn from them, and they soon acquired such confidence in his skill that, even on a dangerous coast on a bad day like this, they were quite content to trust him with the helm.

Between the rocks and the coast of the island

the passage is only a hundred yards wide and the water as smooth as glass, but at the same time its surface showed that oily appearance which to the initiated is an indication of the terrible currents rushing over the rocky bottom, and producing this peculiar appearance. In spite of the strong wind which we were running before, it was all that we could do to keep the way on the boat, and I feared every moment that the wind might drop, if only for an instant, and the boat be dashed against those frowning precipitous cliffs, which seemed so near that they might almost be touched with one's hand. It was a strange, weird sight to see our little boat with its big red sails and yellow top-sail lit up by the harvest moon and standing in strong relief against this little patch of smooth black water, while all around it the angry billows showed their white curling crests. That same top-sail was "Uncle's" badge of distinction. No other sailor in the Islands ever ventured to carry such a piece of canvas

on one of these flat-bottomed and nearly keelless boats.

Having safely negotiated this dangerous passage, we made a successful and quick run to Thorshavn, and shouting our name and number to the sentry on duty at the fort overlooking the harbour mouth, we pulled alongside the landing-stage. Lindsay and I left "Uncle" and the Captain to manage our baggage and proceeded to the Government House. Luckily we found his Excellency had not gone to bed, so we kept him for some time longer, detailing our adventures.

Next day we went fishing at the prost's place, and on the following morning—the weather being superb after the night's storm, although the sea was still running fairly high—we made sail for the Island of Naalsö, which I had always had a great wish to visit, as it had formed a prominent feature in the view descried from our windows at Thorshavn, and from our tent at the first camp. Its chief importance lies

in the fact that it serves as a breakwater to the bay of Thorshavn, protecting it from the easterly gales. It is very steep and of a somewhat circular shape. Eide, the only town on it, is situated upon the neck, which is very narrow and low, so low, in fact, that in winter the sea actually washes over this isthmus, and cuts the island in two.

The village, as we approached it, struck us as one of the most picturesque bits we had yet come upon. The majority of the little houses were painted white, in contrast to the usual darker colours of most Faröese habitations. The church, of the usual black and white wood, reminded me, with its simple architecture, of the modern Norwegian churches, and was prettily situated on a little promontory of rock which juts out into the sea. As we were flying the Governor's private flag on our boat, we were met on landing by the only two merchants of the village and the boat-builder, who is famous for turning out the best craft,

not only of his native village but of all the Islands. The wood for these boats is brought over in the spring by small schooners from the north-west coast of Norway.

As soon as we had landed we were invited by the merchants to their stores, and we asked for permission to shoot over their ground on the island. This permission was readily granted, and we started, Lindsay taking the western shore, while I followed the eastern with "Uncle" as my guide. After going some miles along the coast, I found it advisable to cross over to Lindsay's side, as there was not a little risk in scrambling along the narrow sheep-paths which formed the only foot-holds on the nearly perpendicular slopes. A long and rugged walk brought us to the southern extremity of the island, where the Danish Government, with great liberality, have planned for the benefit of their colonists and other seafarers two lighthouses, one to form a guide for the inside of the sound up to the capital,

and the other as a beacon for the fishing-boats in the open sea. After visiting them, we climbed down the rocks to the beach, where a vast cavern, some hundred feet high and about two hundred yards long, tunnels the island about half a mile from its extremity. So large is the cavern that on my return journey from the Islands on board the steamer I was able with the naked eye to see the light through, although at a distance of about two miles.

Retracing our steps towards Eide, we picked up some very fine specimens of the copper ore for which the island is famous, although no mines appear to have ever been worked. I was told afterwards by Dr. Boeg that this little island is one of the most interesting fields for the geologist, as nearly all the characteristic rocks and minerals of the Faröes may be found there.

Just as we were getting our boat ready for sea the boom of a gun to sea-ward attracted our attention, and what was our surprise to see



A NATIVE TURF-CARRIER.
[To face p. 116.]



ROCKS ON THE ISLAND OF NAALSÖ.
[p. 164.]

our old friend the *Laura* drawing through the narrow fjord between the islands of Naalsö and Stromö. She was on her return journey from Iceland. Although she was due, we hardly expected to see her so punctual, owing to the recent bad weather, but I was very glad, when we sailed alongside and got on board, to find all our friends of the outward voyage well, and having had, according to their different modes of enjoying themselves, an excellent trip to Iceland. I met also on board two English officers returning from a whole summer's encampment on the western coast, where they had enjoyed phenomenal sport amongst the salmon and char. Hurrying ashore and changing our clothes, we fetched out "Uncle's" little sailing cutter, which we decked with the Governor's flag, and again went on board the *Laura*, where Lindsay, acting as captain, took out all the ladies from the steamer for a shore cruise to show them the beauties of the immediate neighbourhood, while I stayed on

board and talked "fishing" with the gentlemen. After a pleasant evening with our old fellow-passengers we returned to Government House. Lindsay woke me about five o'clock, just in time to see the last of the *Laura* dipping her ensign in answer to the salute fired as she steamed out of the fjord.

Hardly had I got to sleep again when, somewhat to my disgust, my companion roused me once more to inform me that a trawler from North Shields had arrived. At a great distance off he had made out her number from the window. This observation did not appear to me to be of sufficient interest to warrant his having again disturbed my slumbers, but anything which may be diagnosed as a ship has a peculiar fascination to my friend, and, much against my will, I was dragged out of bed to look at this not very interesting specimen of naval architecture. It was pleasant enough, however, to have a "crack" with these north countrymen.

I spent the remainder of the morning with my young friend, the English teacher at the National School, who was instructing me in Faröese, a distinct dialect which has more affinity with Icelandic than with Swedish or Danish. Lindsay went off to call on the doctor, who had promised to furnish me with a paper on the medical and surgical statistics of the Islands. While writing I was again summoned by Lindsay, breathless with excitement at having seen in the offing a boat that he recognized as a walrus-sloop. As soon as her boat landed we pounced upon her crew to get all information as to what was going on in the Arctic circle, and how the ice lay this year, a subject of keen interest to both of us. We found the sloop to be the *Betsy*, returning from Nova Zembla and Spitzbergen waters, "clean," we were sorry to learn, for she had only one small tank of oil, and no skins on board. Her want of success was due to her running aground early in the season and spending most of her


time in repairing damages. She gave us some useful information as to the probable position and prospects of the *Windward*, conveying the Jackson-Harmsworth Expedition to Franz Joseph's Land, and these details were subsequently published in the English papers.

CHAPTER IX.

OSTERÖ.

Terpsichore *à la* Faröese—A fair Iclander—Fishing at Osterö—A game fish—Fast and furious sport—A lovely aurora.

AT five p.m. we were forced to tear ourselves away from the *Betsy* and all her attractions, as we had to dress for a dinner-party which was to come off at the Governor's house that evening. Here I had the pleasure of taking in to dinner the very pretty and charming daughter of the judge. Amongst the guests was the senior minister of the Islands, who resided on the Island of Osterö opposite, and who kindly invited us to his manse, and to fish the large lake at the south of this island on the following day. The apothecary and his wife asked us to



walk home with them, and the former said that when we had seen his wife into the house he would show us the interesting sight of a native ball, which was going on in the town.

Picture to yourself a low, long, wooden shed used in the day-time as a store-house for nets and such like fishing gear. Hanging from the roof are two or three paraffin lamps whose flickering flames throw a lurid light on the countenances of the dancers. The dancers join hands, forming a large circle in two alternate groups of eight men and eight women. They never join together, except at the end of each of these groups, where a man holds a woman's hand. When the circle is complete the dance begins. It consists, at first, of a slow march round and round, quickening in pace until it becomes a wild gallop, then slackening down again to a walk, and so on, and so on. For music the dancers chant a wild sort of monotonous dirge, fast or slow according to the pace at which they dance. They have no instru-

ments whatever, and the men do the chief part of the singing. This song, I was told, is a repetition of the old Sagas or histories, both of Norway and Iceland, but the one they are fondest of is an old Faröe Saga or history of the Islands. This Saga has something like two hundred verses, and as they are all chanted to the same tune, the whole performance seems, to an ordinary observer, a trifle monotonous.

When once the circle has been begun it continues going round till the whole dance is over, the dancers breaking away from and joining it again at will. Sometimes, I am told, they will start at eight in the evening, and continue till six the next morning. This is the only dance they have, and they never vary it, except, perhaps, in favour of what they call English dances, which consist of a sort of waltz and polka, danced to the music of a couple of violins. Although a much more sober performance, the Faröese dance reminded me

very much of the Esquimaux dances on the coast of Greenland, and the Icelandic native dance I witnessed at a small fishing village on the north-west coast of that island. Sunday is their favourite day for dancing, and, at the capital, one of these performances is held every Sunday evening.

As an instance of the truth of the old saying how very small the world is, on my entering the dancing-room, as the dancers were whirling round I remember distinctly hearing someone pronounce my name. I felt confident that no one present knew me, and decided for the instant that I had been mistaken. What was my surprise when the dance was over to recognize, by her picturesque native dress, an Iceland girl, the sister of a farmer with whom I had stayed two years ago when fishing on the west coast. This young lady, who had been in the service of the priest at Reykjavik, spoke very good English, and I was glad to hear through her about my old friends in Iceland, and all the gossip of that

charming but out-of-the-world capital, where I had spent so many happy weeks and had made so many real friends among the kind-hearted, hospitable folk, whom I shall never forget.

This was the most dissipated evening we spent during our tour, for we never got to bed at all, arriving home from the dance only just in time to change into our shooting clothes and get on board the boat which was to carry us to Osterö. "Uncle" also appeared to have spent a convivial evening at the dance, and it needed all the chaff of the Captain, the only one who had abstained from this frivolity, to keep us sufficiently awake to proceed on our voyage. At the end of a pleasant sail of about three hours we landed at the foot of the rocks under the parsonage windows. The invitation given us the night before had evidently not been forgotten, for when our boat was in sight of the manse we saw through our glasses his Reverence himself hoisting his pennant as a welcome, and on landing we found an inviting breakfast of

coffee and cakes awaiting us. Lindsay and I were presented to the clergyman's wife, and to a brother clergyman from Denmark, an old college companion, who was staying with him. After breakfast we started to reach the fishing, and had a toilsome walk of about two miles up a very steep incline to the top of the hill, where we found three rather small lakes, which somewhat disappointed us after the description we had received of them.

We began to fish, but with no result. A native came up and informed us that these were not the fishing lakes, but that the lake we had evidently come to fish in was another mile further on. On walking over what proved to be the real crest of the mountain, we saw in the valley before us the lake which was our goal. It was a magnificent sheet of water, three miles in length and half a mile wide. Although we had been told that there was a boat at the far end, we could find no trace of one, so we were forced to wade in and fish from the shore. Up to

lunch we were very unsuccessful, for there was no wind, and a fly was nearly useless. The only fish that either of us was able to take was a beautiful golden trout of about two and a half pounds, which I shall long remember as one of the gamest fish I ever caught. It made a succession of leaps from the water as soon as it was hooked, and time after time fought more like a salmon than a trout. I was using my little nine feet split-cane rod, and I caught this fish with a new combination of a small spoon-bait about half an inch long, with a rather gaudy-looking lake trout fly, which had been presented to me by our local fishing-tackle maker at Leamington, Mr. Hobson, as a specimen of what his brother-in-law in Canada had found very useful on some of the lakes.

After lunch bad luck again awaited us, so I gave up fishing and attacked the surrounding heaths with my 28-bore, to try and pick up a hare or two, or any birds that might be found.

Towards six o'clock, when the sun was sinking, a nice breeze sprang up and I descended to the south end of the lake, where Lindsay and the others had encamped for tea. Having reached the lake, I found that the extreme end of it, which formed a circular pool about 600 yards across—divided from the main lake by a narrow stone bridge—was simply alive with fish, the whole surface of the water being rippled with their rises, and luckily I found that the water was deep enough to fish right up to the banks. For an hour and a half the fun was fast and furious. Every time I could spare a moment to look up from my rod I found that Lindsay was generally like myself—fast in a fish. In a short time we had secured about twenty brace between us. Though they averaged rather more than a pound, the fish were none of them as large as the one I had caught at the other end of the lake, but were very game for their size. With a boat for fishing from the centre of the lake, we should have caught

fish, if report was true, bidding fair to rival the finny monsters of the Vaagö Lakes.

As it was now getting dark and the wind was increasing, "Uncle" thought, if we wanted to return to the parsonage that night, we had better make a start homewards. On descending the other side, we found the wind so favourable, that, although we had half pledged ourselves to sleep at his Reverence's, the prospect of making a lovely midnight sail across the fjord, illuminated as it was by a most perfect aurora, was too much for us, and we straightway embarked to return to Thorshavn. Once afloat, we could not regret our decision, for there was just enough wind to take us along in almost smooth water, and every star and every constellation were beautifully reflected on the surface of the sea, whilst the aurora stretched in one unbroken span, one end seeming to rest on the Island of Stromö, and the other on the mountains of Osterö, making up a spectacle the like of which I had

never seen, and probably never will see again. The navigation of the boat affording us no anxiety, we ventured, bad seamanship as the practice must always be, to make fast the sheet, light up our spirit lamp and brew some tea. We then had a delightful supper, all sitting round in the stern of the boat. Afterwards we smoked our pipes, and lay down to watch the beautiful scene, while the Captain and "Uncle" entertained us with numerous yarns of their adventures on these coasts and on the ice-bound shores of Iceland and eastern Greenland, which they annually visit in the spring for fishing. It was very late when we landed, and we at once repaired to Government House, where we found the Governor, as usual, still sitting up in his smoke-room, waiting for us.

CHAPTER X.

THE NORTHERN ISLANDS.

Miavenaes headland—Gjothavig Fjord—"Tadpole"
Kalsö—Borö—Klaksvig—Viderö and Wood Bay—
View of Fuglö and Svinö—A native repast—Mulen
headland—Skare and Skaltofte—A big string of
wild-fowl.

IN my visit to the northern islands I had not the companionship of my friend Lindsay. I set off in the steamship *Laura*, in order to visit this most interesting district. From Thorshavn we steamed up the fjord between the Island of Naalsö and the mainland, and had a fine view of the long strait between Stromö and Osterö, the early morning sunlight showing up the tints on its rocky sides to perfection. Then we entered upon the open sea, though still hugging the coast to avoid the strong current

of the flowing tide which was beginning to run. On rounding the point of Osterö we caught a glimpse of the village of Naes, a rising little place, and next we passed the Bay of Ridevig, with the village of the same name. This tiny settlement has been established only within the last fifteen years. Our next view was of the rocky headland of Nebbet and the Lambavig Fjord, with Lambavig village at its head. Judging by the tumble-down appearance of the houses, this seemed to be a place whose glory had departed, and so it proved to be, for in olden days it was the residence of the Governor. I regret that it was impossible to land and explore the ruins of its former splendour.

The rocky headland of Miavenaes now came into view, and a magnificent sight it was, rising to a great height in one perpendicular wall, against which was dashing the surf in immense rollers, only to be driven back in clouds of spray. So deep is the water round this point that we were able to steam near enough for the spray to

dash right over our decks. After rounding the point, we got into comparatively smooth water again, as we were now between the islands of Osterö and Borö, and, running at half speed, we got a good view of the Gjothavig Fjord, the largest inland fjord in the Islands. At its head lie three villages, all called Gjothe, surrounded by large tracts of flat ground, beautifully cultivated, and sheltered on three sides by the high mountains that surround the fjord. These villages are famous as being the stronghold and dwelling-place of Trond, the ancient Faröese Viking chief, who ruled with such cruelty and bloodshed, and of whom I have spoken more fully in my account of the ancient history of the Islands.

Having crossed the mouth of this fjord, where we saw some half dozen of the picturesque double-ended fishing boats of the islanders plying their dangerous calling of halibut-fishing, we entered the Levigs Fjord, and got a fine view of the sugar-loaf mountains

of the Island of Kalsö. Resembling a tadpole in shape, this island has a long round head, topped by a sugar-loaf cone, and then runs off in a narrow tail about ten miles long and nowhere over three-quarters of a mile in breadth. This is the most volcanic of all the Islands in appearance, except, perhaps, Kunö, its whole tail being one unclimbable stony ridge rising to the height of eighteen hundred feet. Clustered upon the shore are a few scattered villages consisting of but half a score of tiny huts—and one of these little settlements had to shift itself in the worst part of the winter a few years ago on account of the great stone avalanche which nearly overwhelmed it. We saw a few stone walls which I was told are all that mark the site of this, now non-existent, village of Blakkeskaale.

Pursuing our course, we soon entered the narrow sound which led to our destination of Klaksvig, the capital of the North. The lonely little settlement came into view on turning the

abrupt arm of the fjord here, and it was a sight well worth all the trouble of the journey. This settlement, which goes by the above name, really consists of three small villages, all within a stone's throw of each other. The three villages are called respectively Morkenore, Klaksvig, and Vaih, and are situated on either side of a low neck of land about half a mile in length and breadth. This is being carefully cultivated and laid out in little crofts. The villages are the neatest and tidiest that I saw in all the Islands, and by far the cleanest and most sanitary, the drains neither being open nor running along each side of the street, as is the case with most of the villages.

After the recent wet and stormy weather, to have a three days' stay on this charming spot was a great relief, especially as the weather was now lovely and there was a great inducement to do nothing but sit and bask on a rock in the sun. But the scenery was too enticing, so I started off with my gun for a long ramble round

the side of the fjord. I greatly missed Lindsay on this trip, for I was entirely alone. A tremendous climb was necessary in order to reach the other side of the island, where I found a small village called Tofte. Here I got some milk, and then wandered up the coast to two small places called Dehle and Norddehle. I luckily found a farmer who could speak a few words of English, and who kindly gave me a bed for the night. Right glad I was of it, being far too tired to attempt to recross the island, especially as the mountain pass I had to encounter on my way was none too easy even in daylight, and to tackle it when dead-beat and in the dark would hardly have been safe.

I commenced the next day with a swim in the sea, a proceeding which aroused great curiosity and admiration on the part of my host. I then got him to row me over to the Island of Viderö, which is only about three hundred yards distant at this part. From here

I walked over the land and visited the famous Vevig, or Wood Bay, which affords a very curious spectacle. The whole foreshore of this bay is piled high with drift-wood, and from the big trunks I infer that there is some specially strong current which brings them from the rivers of Norway and Arctic Siberia, for some of the trunks often bear the private mark of Russian and Norwegian owners. Why the current favours this one little bay almost exclusively is more than I can tell.

After a splendid view from the mountain top of the two most easterly islands of Fuglö and Svinö, I returned to Dehle to dine with my friendly host on some lovely slices of an enormous halibut, which his boy had caught that morning. This tasty dish, followed by the universal dried mutton peculiar to Faröe and Iceland, washed down by milk and brandevin or corn whisky, made me feel quite at home with this rugged islander in his little hut, although neither of us knew more than twenty

words of each other's language. A pipe of my English tobacco was much appreciated by my host, and then I managed by signs and the little Faröese I knew, mixed with Norwegian and Danish, to make him understand that I wanted to return to Klaksvig. So, at the end of a long confab, it was agreed that he, with another fisherman, should, for the modest sum of five kroner, sail me round the north of the island home.

It was now about two o'clock, and he decided to start at once. We had a fine run up the Kvannasund, passing the little villages of Mule and Viderö (the latter sheltered in a nice little bay, where a local trading smack was at anchor), rounded the rocky headland of Mulen, and reached into the Haraldsund between Borö and Kunö. We saw nothing of interest but the flocks of gulls and guillemots circling round us as we passed the high cliffs, white with their last year's nesting places. On reaching the settlements of Skare and Skaltofte,

opposite each other on different sides of the sound, I stopped to have two or three shots at fowl. A crowd of natives came running down to the beach to have a look at the solitary stranger who had ventured alone so far from civilization. Probably my visit, and especially my gun, which they greatly admired, provided them with many a topic of conversation afterwards.

The sound now became narrower, and we could no longer sail, so we began to row, and in an hour I was landed at the village of Strond, about two miles from Klaksvig. The former place I wished to explore, and from it I expected to get a fine walk home along the shore. Having paid my boatmen, who were greatly pleased because I gave them an extra kroner each for their trouble, we parted, and I set off homeward with my gun and a big string of wild-fowl. I was glad to leave Strond, for it is an uninteresting and dirty little settlement. At Aaerne I purchased some milk and biscuits for

supper, and arrived at Klaksvig at about ten. Here I was invited by the post-master—who was entertaining a few friends, and was very glad to see me again—to a second supper and a fine bowl of hot Swedish punch, and as he and one of his friends spoke very fair English, we had a most festive party. At about midnight I left them to go home to my quarters at the other side of the fjord. I had to row all alone in the dinghy across the water, but a most lovely sight was this little settlement, with its wooden houses and their quaint turf roofs and wooden chimneys. To many of the houses, flag-posts were fastened, and in the faint breeze the red-and-white Danish flag fluttered here and there.

This picture was backed by the giant black rocks of the surrounding mountains, with their jagged pinnacles, showing against the skyline—and the whole scene, bathed in the white rays of the September moon, reflected itself on the waters of the fjord. At the mouth of the inlet

I passed between the islands of Kalsö and Kunö, which looked mysterious in this subdued light. The white patches of the birds' nests on the surrounding rocks, catching the gleam, shone out as if the cliffs on each side were studded by some wizard's hand with thousands of precious stones. It was a striking and never-to-be-forgotten picture.

The next morning I was up by day-break, meaning to enjoy my last day in this charming neighbourhood. Having procured a boat and some breakfast, I started to row down the fjord to the cliffs, where the birds were so numerous, with a view to collecting a few of the rarest for my specimen-cabinet. I was very successful in this object, and managed to secure half-a-dozen more sea-fowl, among which was a grand old skua, shot in the very act of robbing an Arctic tern of its finny prey. My heart smote me when pulling the trigger and this old pirate fell fluttering in the water; but, still, I can honestly console myself with the reflection


that in none of my travels did I ever shoot a single bird not wanted for a specimen, or for eating. Few sportsmen, perhaps, can say as much.

CHAPTER XI.

LAST DAYS IN STROMÖ.

Scenery of Sandö—Inspection of a Danish man-of-war—
The doctor of Thorshavn—Hospital and Lunatic
Asylum—The doctor's art-collection—The judge and
his hospitality—Visit to the *Betsy*—Farewell calls—
Departure from Stromö.

OUR visit to the Islands was now drawing to a close. We had only one more long excursion in contemplation to Sandö, which lies midway between the northern group and the southern Island of Suderö. "Uncle" had brought us an invitation from relations who lived there, and he was very anxious that we should fish the two large lakes on Sandö, one of which is the second largest lake on the Islands, and has a great reputation for fishing. We were, however, compelled to abandon the contemplated



visit, for a south-westerly wind sprang up, which, although favourable to our outward journey, might have rendered it impossible for us to return in time for the steamer, due in a few days.

It is said that Sandö is one of the most beautiful of the Islands. It is not so mountainous as the others, and has more cultivated land. Nevertheless the scenery is described as being exceedingly charming. One valley, called "The Valley of Sand," is much frequented by birds of all kinds, and is very picturesque. We could quite endorse this report from what we had seen of the eastern coast from the steamer on our voyage out, and we were looking forward to a day or two's exploration of the island.

On one of our last mornings at Thorshavn a sergeant from the fort reported that a Danish man-of-war was in the offing, and we were soon ascending the hill behind the Governor's house to get a view of her. She was approach-

ing under steam and her two trysails, foretop mast staysail and jib, and dropped anchor just under the fort. We hurried back to the Government House, for we saw her lower her steam-launch to bring the captain on shore. He came in full uniform to pay his respects to the Governor, and we were introduced, and spent a very pleasant hour chatting with him. He spoke irreproachable English, and we were much impressed with his appearance. He was as fine and handsome a specimen of a naval officer as we had ever seen; a man well over six feet in height, with the carriage and bearing of a Guardsman, he struck us as looking more like a soldier than a sailor. He had recently returned from his annual cruise round Iceland, his vessel being told off for the protection of the northern fisheries and colonies of Denmark, and he was able to give us all the news from Iceland, and seemed pleased that I had so many friends to inquire after in that country. He at once invited us to go on board

his ship, the *Diana*, a fine barque-rigged cruiser, with a splendid armament of guns. He himself was obliged to return immediately; but in the course of the morning Captain Andreassen sailed us out in his boat to pay a visit to the cruiser.

We were most graciously received by the captain and his first lieutenant, and the former, who personally conducted us over his ship, was much pleased at my friend Lindsay's thorough knowledge and appreciation of his armament. In addition to those of larger calibre, the ship carried four quick-firing guns, one of which the captain had manœuvred by a detachment of the crew in order that we might thoroughly understand its mechanism. The manner in which the drill was performed reflected the very highest credit on the smartness of his seamen, and could probably not be surpassed by those of any navy in the world. The captain also showed us some of the newest inventions in submarine sounding, with which

appliances he had been making more exact surveys of some of the less known banks in those portions of the ocean round Iceland which formed his cruising ground. Amongst the equipment was a perfect assortment of diving dresses, which were specially interesting to me, as I once made a trial of one. After inspecting the ship, we were entertained at lunch by the commander and his officers. The doctor was an enthusiastic naturalist, and had made great use of his opportunities for securing rare and valuable specimens of fish and submarine objects during the dredging operations round Iceland. Most of his treasures were packed up where he could not get at them, which we much regretted. So much interested were we in all we saw on board, that it was with reluctance we remembered an engagement to dine with the doctor of Thorshavn. The captain insisted on keeping us till the last moment, and sending us ashore in a well-manned boat so as to have our company as

long as possible. Only a few minutes before the appointed dinner-hour we stepped into the man-of-war's boat, and Lindsay, quite overcome by such a compliment being paid to him, was asked by the petty officer to take the yoke lines. He very fully justified the confidence placed in him, steering the boat through the labyrinth of craft which encumbered the harbour in a manner which evidently gained the sailors' admiration.

On arriving at the doctor's house, we found that he had been called out to see a patient. During his absence we were entertained by a little boy of ten and a little girl of eight, both of most engaging manners, and speaking English just as well as we did. It turned out presently that they had been spending six months at Malvern. Their mother, during our absence from Thorshavn, had met with an accident, and fractured her leg and was lying upstairs in bed. After dinner we strolled round the head of the bay, in company with the doctor, to

visit the hospital. The exterior was not very promising, but on entering we were delighted to find the arrangements far beyond anything we had expected. The whole of the interior was painted a pale blue; the wooden floors were highly polished; the four little wards, each accommodating four patients, looked neat and cheerful. There was a very good operating theatre, all the latest appliances in the way of instruments having been supplied by the Danish Government. There was also a fair-sized library for the use of the patients, and we were pleased to observe that most of the European languages were represented, obviously with a view to the use of the institution by sailors of all nations. The people of Thorshavn are indeed fortunate in having such a hospital, and a doctor like Dr. Boeg to look after it, who enjoys a high reputation in his native university, both as a scientist and as skilled operator, and, besides these attainments, possesses a most genial manner and kindly presence.

We also visited a lunatic asylum in connection with the hospital. Here we saw room for improvement ; but any shortcomings may be perhaps attributed to the fact that the place is not generally overdone with patients, for in this part of the world, even more than in England, the relatives have a rooted objection to sending their demented friends to an asylum, unless they are too violent to be managed properly at home.

We returned with the doctor to his house, and had the pleasure of assisting him in a few consultations on patients who called during the evening. The rest of the time was chiefly devoted to music, of which the doctor is a skilful amateur, and he was pleased to find in Lindsay a congenial spirit. I must not forget to mention that our host is also a great lover of paintings, and has a really wonderful collection.

Before taking our leave, we adjourned to his smoking-room and looked over his valuable

archæological collection, being especially attracted by some lovely old silver drinking-cups, one or two being magnificent specimens. One of them would contain sufficient, it is said, for a draught for twelve men, whose separate drinks are marked off by a row of silver pegs along the inside of the cup. It is studded on the outside with curious old gold coins of a very ancient date. We did not test its capacity, but a more curious specimen of the silversmith's art I have rarely seen.

The mail-boat was due next day from Iceland, but did not turn up, as the weather, for some days very rough, had become worse. So bad was it, that the *Diana* slipped her moorings, and had to proceed to the open sea, thus preventing our bidding adieu to the captain and his kind officers. But, in spite of rumours that the mail-boat had been delayed forty-eight hours, we thought it best to be prepared, and so spent the whole day at Captain

Andreasen's store, packing up our various *impedimenta*, in order to be ready for her.

In the evening we were entertained at a farewell banquet by the judge, whose wife and daughter were intending to return by the same steamer to Copenhagen. Everyone of importance in the capital was present, and we sat down—a party of thirty—to quite a regal spread. The judge's house, be it recorded, is most handsomely furnished, all the furniture being of ancient date and of the choicest description. His dining-room is a splendid apartment—the ceiling tapestried, and the whole of the walls covered with a magnificent collection of bronzes and brasses, of which he is a great connoisseur. The drawing-room, furnished with all the profusion of a fashionable West End mansion, found space for choice pieces of antique workmanship.

The greater part of the evening was, as usual, devoted to music, in which Lindsay, the Governor, and Mr. Philipsen were the principal performers. The latter's choice bary-

tone rendering of the Danish national songs charmed all hearers. The festive party broke up, not without a feeling of regret on our part that we were so soon to bid adieu to hosts so kind and hospitable, and a country so simple and picturesque.

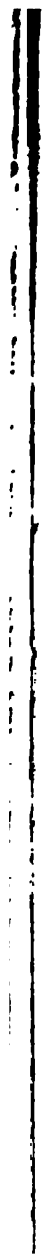
The next morning we spent some time on board the *Betsy*, the little "Finner" whaler, which was lying in the harbour. This branch of whaling has always interested me, and I rather pride myself on having invented one or two harpoons, and a tying belt for dead fish at sea. At Stromö I made a special study of all the varieties of implements that are in present use among the Norwegians ; but I must reserve for a separate chapter a detailed description of the whaling industry. Our visit to the *Betsy* over, we went on board one of Captain Andreasen's smacks, the *Beautiful Star*, which had just arrived from the east coast of Iceland, full up to her decks with cod, after a most successful voyage, which, of course, put the Captain in good spirits.

We then returned to the town, and met our friends of the night before, and we all made a very pleasant excursion to a beautiful waterfall, about two and a half miles from Thorshavn, where I was able to take some photographs. On our return we paid a few more farewell visits, not forgetting our Iceland friend, and spent the rest of the afternoon in wandering round this picturesque little town which we were soon to leave. There was a farewell dinner party at Government House, which was rather a sad one for all present, as we felt sure that our ship would soon arrive, and many of our friends who were going to accompany us were leaving the Islands for the winter. Mrs. Buchwaldt was quite depressed, for she was losing several of her small circle of intimate acquaintances. To those who were going to leave the Hyperborean regions the parting was not so trying as to those who knew that for many months they would practically be left to their own resources, and entirely cut off by



THORSHAVN IN WINTER.

[*To face p. 202.*]



distance from the friends whom they would not see until the following summer.

The next morning we were roused about half-past four by his Excellency, who appeared in our room in full uniform, and informed us that the mail-boat had been sighted from the Fort Hill, and that we must all hurry down and get breakfast, as he expected from the bad state of the weather she would not be able to ride long at her anchorage in the Haven. When we were sitting down to breakfast a visitor was announced. He turned out to be a passenger from the *Thyra*, the ship which had just arrived. A Danish doctor, and a great friend of the Governor, he had just returned from Iceland, where he had been serving on a Leprosy Commission on behalf of the Danish Government. He was very pleased indeed to meet us, and we had a long and interesting talk on that subject, on which, eighteen months before, I had written in the *Lancet* from copious notes collected during my visit to Iceland, where I had

received every facility from the local medical men. This fact created a bond between the doctor and myself, and I was especially glad to hear that he would be my fellow-passenger on the return voyage, and not remain in Thors-havn, as had been his original intention. We went down to the landing-stage, and the Governor and I put off in the police-boat to pay an official visit to the captain of the *Thyra*. This gentleman, who was a Danish naval officer, proved most agreeable, and, thanks to the Governor's introduction, he gave me a considerable amount of information about Iceland.

On returning to the shore, we found it crowded with our friends. The weather was fine, but a high wind made it evident that the steamer could not much longer delay leaving for the open sea, and so, after many handshakings and farewells, we were compelled to go on board. The judge's wife and daughter, Lindsay and myself, were put on board by the Governor's private boat, manned by some of

the garrison, the Governor himself accompanying us to the ship to take a last farewell. Our parting with Mrs. Buchwaldt, the Governor's wife, was quite affecting. Her personal kindness and many little attentions to us I shall never forget, especially at the time when I was incapacitated at the beginning of my visit with a sprained ankle. As soon as we got on board it was easy to guess, by the captain's face, as he kept casting anxious glances to seaward, that we had no time to lose, and directly "Uncle" and Captain Andreasen had put our last bag on deck, the steam-whistle sounded, and we knew that now our pleasant visit was really at an end. We had just time to run down the accommodation ladder and have a final "shake hands" with his Excellency and our two faithful friends, "Uncle" and the Captain, when the screw began to revolve and the *Thyra* turned her nose seaward. In a few minutes Lindsay and I were standing on the poop waving our handkerchiefs, and the last

glimpse we caught of Thorshavn as we steamed out of the harbour revealed the figure of his Excellency in the stern of his boat, answering our signals of farewell. The British Consul was kind enough to hoist the Union Jack as good-bye. As we passed the little *Betsy*, her crew all jumped into the rigging to give us a cheer, and her Norwegian harpooner, with whom we had become quite friendly, fired off his three harpoon guns as a farewell salute to us, one of the hands at the same time dipping the ensign.

CHAPTER XII.

WHALING.

Herr Müller's antecedents—Method of whale-hunting—
"Keeping the school"—"Driving"—The finishing
stroke—The harpoon—Boats—Whales and their
parasites—"The tiger of the ocean"—Method of
"keeping the school" at Vestmanhavn—Division
of the spoil—Weapons—Varieties of the whale—
"Finner" hunting and the *Betzy*—Uses of the whale
—Herr Müller's record.

ONE of the three great industries of the Faröe Islands is whale-fishing, or *grindefangsten*, as it is called in the native language, the word being derived from *grind*—a gathering or multitude. The species of whale chiefly pursued is the bottle-nose or *Grinda-quealur*.

I am principally indebted for my information on this interesting subject to Herr Müller, the veteran whaler and Syeselman of Thorshavn, who has been present at over a hundred whale

hunts. Herr Müller was born on September 2nd, 1818. To quote his own words—"An old Icelfander was our schoolmaster, and he could only teach us religion and the rudiments of ciphering and writing. I have frequented no other school. The name Müller was taken by my grandfather—a farmer's son from Skaalevig, Sandö—who considered it too rustic to be named Christopher Rarmuren when he was studying theology at the University of Copenhagen. He was prost (clergyman) in Suderö."

The whales are captured in the following manner. When a herd of these animals is sighted—and, owing to the number of boats constantly at sea, this generally happens at some distance from the Islands—the boat which first perceives them makes with all speed to the nearest inhabited shore, and, as a signal, fastens a coat or jersey at the top of the mast, the recognized sign among the fishermen that Grind are in sight.

On viewing this signal the villagers at once

kindle a large fire of damp straw, as a warning to the inhabitants of the neighbouring islands. As there are specified places on every island for the lighting of these signal fires, false alarms are of rare occurrence. Boats soon put out from all the adjacent villages, and in a very short time the sea is alive with craft, eagerly hurrying up for the "driving," which is perhaps the most ticklish part of the whole hunt. The boats are arranged in a semicircle to seaward of the herd, and then, with shouts and splashing of oars and stones—of which they bring a large supply—the terrified animals are driven towards the nearest whale bay. The natives during this process make use of an implement called a "sokn." It consists of a large rounded stone with a hole bored through it. This hole serves to admit a stout piece of whale-skin, about twenty feet long, and the end is then knotted. The "sokn" is swung round the head and splashed into the water, making a great disturbance. The chief difficulty during

the drive is to keep the fish together, and prevent the outlying members from striking out a course for themselves, as others would follow, and part of the divided herd would certainly escape.

The art of keeping the school, which may number as many as 2000, closely packed, and at the same time gradually driving them towards the bay without causing a stampede, is one on which veteran whalers pride themselves greatly.

With due caution and celerity the whales are driven into one of the bays, the chief point in determining the selection of the locality being the existence of a sloping bottom, which shelves on to a sandy beach, so that when the last rush comes the fish may charge up and strand themselves. Bays having a muddy bottom are greatly preferred, as the whales in their terror stir up the mud, and so, blinding themselves, cannot see their way to the open sea. One or two of the best places in the Islands are spoilt by ridges of sunken rock, against which the

smaller whales are forced during their scurry up the narrow fjord, thus causing an interruption to the drive and, it may be, turning the herd towards the sea. Occasionally, on account of the very strong tides and currents running between the Islands, it is impossible to drive the fish into the required bay. Then a process termed "laying-up" is resorted to. The herd is driven into the mouth of the haven, which is then surrounded by a double or even treble ring, according to the number of the boats engaged, the splashing of oars, stones, sokn, etc., being kept up to prevent the whales from attempting to force a passage out of the bay. Fish have in this way been "laid up" for a period of three or four days on account of bad weather and adverse tides.

There they lie, rolling over each other, spouting and disporting themselves, but always herding together, as though each one feared to be the first to make a dash for liberty through the barrier of boats.

When the right moment for "driving" has arrived, the oldest and head whaler of the fleet directs his boat towards the herd, and, selecting the animal which he considers to be in the most favourable position, drives his lance into its body near the tail, the agony of the wound causing the fish to dart forward. This is regarded as the most critical moment of the whole hunt, for a badly directed blow may cause the wounded animal to swerve and head in a wrong direction, and once a struck fish has started, the whole herd will at once follow, nor will any splashing or shouting avail to arrest their mad rush. The only way to cause a diversion is to put the wounded one out of his pain, when it may be possible to commence driving again as the herd becomes quiet.

If the blow is successful, the whales, following their wounded leader, rush blindly forward, stranding themselves upon the shore, where they are at once attacked with lances and

knives by the people waiting for this event. The men, and often women too, drag the whales up to the beach by means of a large hook, to the eye of which a stout rope, about twenty fathoms long, is attached. This hook is termed a "grindacrook" and is furnished with two large fixed barbs. The fish having been dragged up the beach, a hand's breadth is measured backwards from the blow-hole, and the "grindaknivur," or long whale knife, is plunged into the back, thus instantly severing the spinal cord. At one of these hunts, an old woman, all whose male relations were in the boats, performed prodigies of valour by slaying over seventy stranded whales with a carving knife.

The fish not driven on shore are killed by the lance of the harpooner in each boat's bow. When a whale is mortally wounded and approachable, the harpooner directs his boat towards the stricken animal, which is probably writhing in agony on the surface of the

encrimsoned water ; then, seizing his opportunity, the man orders the boat to dart forward, and leaning over the bow he strikes the " grind-acrook " into the carcase. The boat is now backed astern while the whale lashes the water into foam with blows from its tail and flippers. In a minute or two the line attached to the hook is passed to the men on shore, who, in spite of the beast's struggles, haul him up on to the beach and speedily despatch him, clearing the line and hook and allowing the boat to continue the battle.

The harpoon is very little used among the Faröese fishermen ; in fact it is illegal for a man to use the heavy harpoon except under special circumstances, for by the use of such a weapon each boat can only hold, and possibly kill, one whale at a time, whilst if the lance were being plied amongst the herd of terrified fish, a good harpooner might be the means of despatching in a few minutes above a dozen victims. The only time when the use of the harpoon is allowed is after a general slaughter, when a

single fish escapes towards the open sea, and one boat only is sent in pursuit, as it would not be worth while for a number of craft to follow and drive it back into the bay. When a single whale is sighted at sea the boatmen may harpoon it, but this is an event of rare occurrence, as Grind are very gregarious.

The vessels used in this fishing are the ordinary Faröese fishing boats, which are about twenty feet long, double-ended, and stoutly built, with a good deal of beam in comparison with their length. This style of build is adopted because the boats have no keel, and when under sail their great beam keeps them stiff. Owing to their lack of keel, however, they will not look up very close to the wind even with a mizzen set, and when close-hauled they go to leeward very quickly, making as much leeway as headway. When engaged in whale hunting they carry four rowers, three harpooners and a steersman, and are generally provided with from two to four lances, a knife, and two or three hooks.

As to the whales themselves, they are said by the best native authorities to be of two distinct breeds. One of these has a broader dorsal fin, is fatter and more easily driven than the other, which is a slightly longer and more slender fish. This latter species is a very ungovernable animal to drive.

The herds, or schools, average about 600, though small herds of from six to twelve are often seen, and large ones up to 2000 have been met with occasionally. In a school the males average about one-third of the number and are much the larger fish; a good male running up to about twenty-two feet, while a female barely exceeds thirteen and a half. They are in the best condition during the winter, but at this season, owing to the roughness of the weather, are seldom captured.

While the hunters were watching a school of whales one day, before the boats had assembled for the driving, it was noticed that many of the fish were constantly rushing about,

rubbing against each other and springing out of the water, much as our English trout do when at play. On examination of the dead fish it was ascertained that this apparent playfulness was really due to the presence of a parasite not unlike an ordinary pond-leech, about three inches in length, swelling out towards the lower extremity, and of a purplish-blue colour. Many of the whales were infested by these sea-ticks, especially about the mouth and behind the ears. In many cases the pests had almost driven the poor animals mad, for those attacked proved to be the poorest and thinnest in the herd, being covered with sores, primarily caused by the leeches, but aggravated by the fish scratching themselves against rocks in order to rid themselves of their disagreeable hangers-on. The black or Greenland whale is also bothered by parasites which resemble small crabs more than anything else. This whale is also frequently seen in the open sea springing out of the water in order to

dislodge the pests which collect behind the flippers.

I am told also that many of the whales captured in Faröese waters are covered with terrible scars, some having the whole or part of a fin bitten off. Herr Müller, who is about the best living authority on Grind, considers that these wounds must be attributed to the *Delphinus orca*, or thrasher, and that a herd of whales may sometimes be seen in full flight, pursued by one or two of these tigers of the ocean. The same authority says that, after examining the interior of the stomach of several whales, he found their food to consist chiefly of cuttle fish.

At Vestmanhavn, which is situated in a large sheltered bay communicating with the fjord by a very narrow entrance—and therefore a most favourable place for driving whales—a novel method has been adopted for keeping the fish under control. As the head of the bay is very rocky, the mountains running down

very abruptly to the water, and consequently unfavourable for the usual *modus operandi*, the fish have to be killed in the deep water. An enormous net has therefore been made by the villagers to stretch across the mouth of the haven to prevent the whales escaping during the slaughter. This net was the invention of the local clergyman, a great enthusiast at whale-hunting. The first one was constructed roughly of stout cord, with a six-foot mesh, and floated by means of empty barrels. It was found very successful, except that the size of mesh allowed many fish to escape. Accordingly, two years ago, a great improvement was effected, the cost being defrayed by deducting a share from the produce of the whales annually killed in Vestmanhavn. The new net is kept afloat by fifty barrels, and weighted below by leaden blocks six inches square, the mesh being much reduced. It is kept in a special wooden hut near the mouth of the haven, and has already repaid its cost, so that

only a small percentage on every capture is required to keep it in repair.

The best places for whaling in the Faröe Islands are the fjords between Stromö and Osterö, and Stromö and Vaagö.

A large whale will yield about thirty gallons, or one Danish barrel, of oil, worth about £2 10s. The flesh is valued at half this amount, therefore the average whale may be reckoned as worth about £3 15s.

After the slaughter, the whales are dragged up the beach, and the marking, numbering, and valuing—the next most important part of the proceedings—is undertaken by the Syeseland. The boat which first sighted the Grind receives as a reward the largest whale caught during the whole hunt. The head of this fish is given to the man who first announced the presence of the herd. The whole of the remainder of the capture is then valued, one-tenth being divided between the Church and the Crown. The inhabitants of the bay in

which the slaughter takes place get the next largest fish, the flesh of which is cooked as a feast for all the hunters and visitors, the oil being the perquisite of the cooks. After this deduction the remainder of the whales are speedily apportioned between the hunters and the people of the district.

When the feasting and rejoicings following the division of the whales are over—there being much gaiety and excitement over such events—the fishermen load their boats deeply and depart to their islands and villages, singing a native hymn of praise.

It is forbidden by law to overload the boats with whale flesh, as so many accidents occurred in former days. The crews, probably under the influence of excitement and drink, neither noticed nor cared whether the craft was dangerously deep in the water. It has, therefore, been enacted that there shall be the space of a spread hand between the surface of the water and the boat's gunwale.

Another law provides that, after the cutting up or "making off," as it is termed by the Greenland whalers, all refuse flesh, entrails, etc., must be removed from the shore, carried out to sea and thrown overboard, not later than seventy-two hours after the killing, and it is the duty of the Syeseland of the district to see this provision strictly enforced. This is a very salutary piece of legislation, as the neglect of such a mass of putrefying flesh would cause dangerous disorders among the inhabitants, and, indeed, uncleanness; the allowing of fish-refuse and offal to remain about is one of the greatest faults of the Faröese. It is also decreed that all whales that have been killed and are not secured within three days become the property of the finder, and it is partly for this reason that the hook is so much used during the hunt, as many fish sink immediately they are killed. These sunken whales are called "drivhvaln" by the natives, and I am told that in some fjords they form as much as ten

per cent. of the total kill, owing to the unfavourable nature of the bay.

Comparing the pursuit of the *Grinda-quealur* with that of other species of whales, it may be considered quite as dangerous, for many boats are smashed in a single hunt. Perhaps this is due in many cases rather to the carelessness in approaching wounded fish than to actual malice on the part of the animals themselves; yet struck fish have been known to charge a boat, smashing it into fragments, and throwing its occupants into the water.

One Faröese whaling custom deserves warm commendation. All injuries to men or boats during the hunts are made good out of the total value of the whales killed, previous to division.

I may now add a few words of description as to the weapons. First comes the lance, called by the natives "vopn," which consists of a steel spear-head about twelve inches long and four and a half inches broad, the shank being

fastened to a stout pine-wood shaft about seven feet in length. Running from a ring attached to the shank is a stout line, so that in the event of a whale tearing the weapon from the hand of the wielder during the death-struggle, it may be secured by means of the cord made fast in the boat.

The next weapon is the hook, or "grinda-crook." It is made of steel, and furnished with a double flat barb, not unlike a small boat's anchor, about twenty inches long and an inch and a half in diameter, with an eye for the attachment of the line. Then there is the little used "skutil," or harpoon, which is not unlike those affected by the Scotch whalers. It consists of a shank of soft Swedish iron with a large barb, which on entering the fish's body pulls across, forming a sort of T-piece, and thereby having an immense hold upon the fibrous framework of the blubber. We must not omit the "grindaknivur," which is used for giving the fish their *coup de grâce* when stranded.

WHALING IMPLEMENTS

Grinda Knivur or



Knife for killing Whales.



Soken for driving the Whales.



Grinda Crook or Whale Hook.

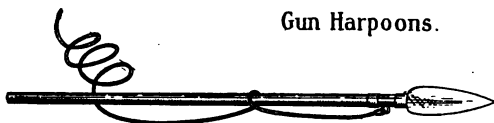


Movable Barbs

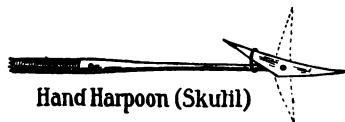


Fixed Barbs

Gun Harpoons.



Whale Lance (Grinda Vopn) with Line attached



Hand Harpoon (Skuhil)

Amongst some of the better-class fishermen the knife is highly ornamented about the haft and sheath. Some specimens I have brought home are adorned with representations of the boats and implements used in whaling, beautifully inlaid with brass and mother-of-pearl. They are entirely hand-made by the natives. The wood of the sheath and hilt, apparently bog-oak, is black and highly polished. The blade is from ten to fourteen inches in length. Lastly there is the "sokn," which can hardly be classed as a weapon, as it is only used for driving the fish towards the slaughter grounds.

Besides the *Grinda-quealur*, there are two other species of whales killed around the Farøe Islands, but in much smaller quantities. The first is the "finner" whale. This species is the largest of all whales in this part of the world and is very numerous. They may frequently be seen on the east coast of Scotland, especially during the herring season, as they pursue the shoals of herring in their

migrations from one locality to another. They are often the cause of great excitement on board the Scotch whalers among the Greenland ice, as their "blast," to an inexperienced eye, resembles greatly that of the "right" or "black" fish which is the object of the whaler's search. These "finners" are seldom or never interfered with by the whalers, and consequently they swim boldly alongside the ships almost within a stone's-throw. The reason of their immunity from attack is that they are of less value than the "right" whale, and another consideration is that they are exceedingly dangerous to hunt, for when wounded the creature exerts all its energies and escapes with the utmost velocity. To quote the late Captain Scoresby, "when struck it frequently drags the fast-boat with such speed through the water, that it is liable to be carried immediately beyond the reach of assistance and soon out of sight of both boats and ship. Hence the striker is under the necessity of

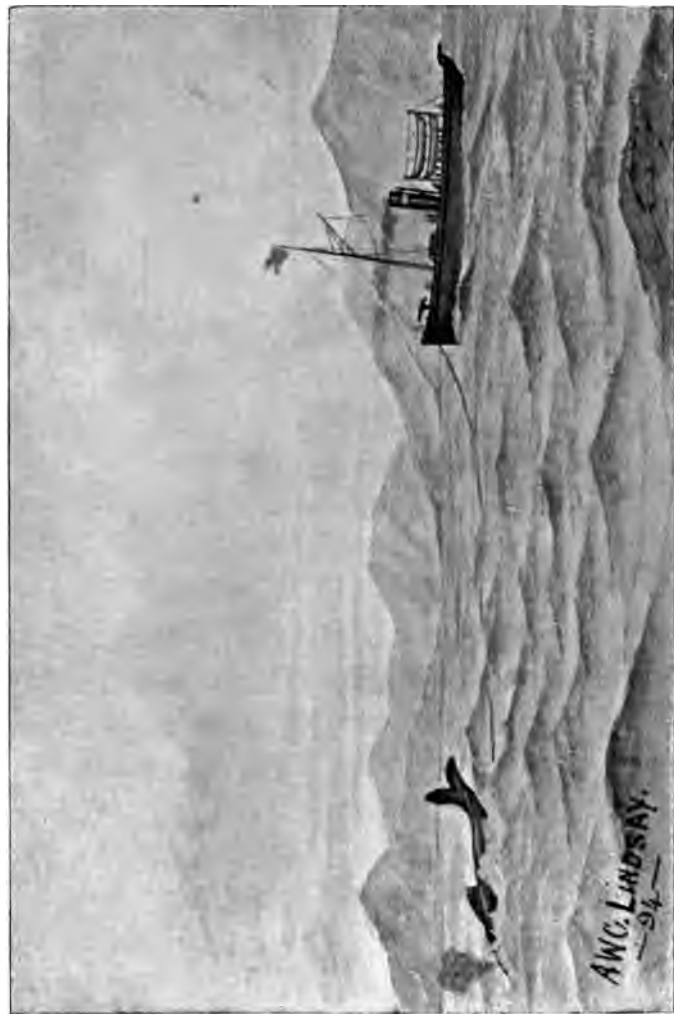
cutting the line, and sacrificing his employer's property, for securing the safety of himself and companions."¹ The killing of these creatures was considered impracticable until, within the last few years, the Norwegians hit upon the method of attacking them with a heavy harpoon, fired from a large gun, mounted in the bow of the whaler, usually a small steamer of about fifty tons burden. The Norwegians, who are about the only people pursuing this dangerous trade, have established over a dozen whaling stations on the Icelandic coast, from which, I understand, their annual income is about a quarter of a million sterling. This year a smaller station was erected for the first time in Faröe in the sound between Stromö and Osterö, and has proved most successful. The "finner" has recently enjoyed the doubtful advantage of imperial patronage, its pursuit being one of the chief attractions that lead the

¹ From "An Account of the Arctic Regions," by W. Scoresby, Jun., F.R.S.E.

German Kaiser to take his autumn cruise in the North Sea. The small whaling-steamer at this station is named the *Urd*, and is of forty tons burden and fifty horse-power, with a speed of about ten knots per hour. She has already killed seventy-two of these large fish. The Faröese are somewhat indignant at the Norwegians being allowed to pursue this trade in their Islands, but they are a very conservative race, and in all probability would have never attempted this branch of industry of their own accord.

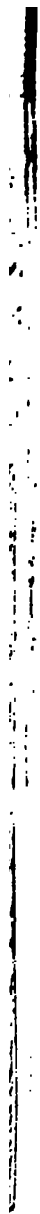
The other species of whale killed every year in small numbers is the lesser-fin or beaked whale (*Balæna rostrata*) or *Doglingur*, as it is called by the natives. It grows to a length of about twenty feet, and furnishes a poor sort of semi-transparent whalebone of a yellowish white colour.

In order to pursue this not unprofitable fish a small syndicate of Faröese merchants has purchased one of the Tromsø walrus-sloops and



THE NORWEGIAN WHALER "URD" FAST TO A FISH.

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fitted her out for this branch of the fishing. She is a small square-sterned little craft called the *Betzy*—to which I have referred in previous chapters—of about forty tons burden, yawl-rigged, but carrying also a square foresail and foretopsail, and is painted in bright colours, red and green with a white ribbon. She is a picturesque little vessel, strongly recalling the smacks one meets in the summer round the coasts of Spitzbergen and Nova Zembla. Her captain, named Johanneson, was exceedingly kind in showing us over her and explaining her gear and outfit. Her whaling battery consists of six guns, two on either bow and one on each quarter, her two boats being also provided with the same weapons. The guns are muzzle-loaders of the same type as those carried by the Peterhead and Dundee whalers, but slightly smaller. She has a crew of sixteen Norwegians.

The whale is of great use to the islanders, and one can readily understand the excitement

which prevails when a herd is reported from seaward. The flesh forms one of the chief articles of diet among the natives. It is prepared for use in two ways: either cut into flat slabs and salted down in barrels, or divided into strips three or four feet long, two or three inches wide, and the same in breadth, and hung up on wooden racks under the eaves of the houses to dry in the sun, just as mutton, fish, and sometimes birds are often treated. These strips of black rubber-looking flesh have anything but an appetizing appearance; the odour, too, is somewhat strong; but the taste belies its looks, for it very much resembles strong English beef. The first time I had the pleasure of tasting it was in soup, where it took the form of balls like forcemeat. Not knowing what it was, I enjoyed it very much, and was greatly surprised when the real nature of the dainty was revealed to me. It is generally eaten boiled, but I never tasted it served in this way.



FIRING A GUN AT A FISH.

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FIRING AT A FISH UNDER THE STERN.

[*p. 230.*]

Life on the "Betzy" Whaler.



The oil is bought up by the merchants and shipped to Denmark, and is said to be chiefly used to soften jute for manufacturing purposes.

Out of the skins of the whale are made the "homlebaard," or oar-slings, with which every Farøe boat is provided in lieu of rowlocks, the latter being unknown in the Islands. These oar-slings are grummets formed by passing a strip of whale-skin through a hole in the boat's gunwale, and knotting the two ends. Through this loop the oar is thrust, the hide catching in a notch made in a piece of flat wood nailed on to the oar at the point where it meets the gunwale.

The subjoined figures will give some idea of the large number of whales killed among the Islands. They are extracted from a record which Herr Müller has kept for the last forty years. The average kill at present appears to be about six hundred, but in former years enormous totals were reached.

1843	...	...	...	...	3,143
1847	...	...	...	...	2,666
1852	...	...	...	...	2,227
1871	...	...	...	...	2,307
1885	...	...	...	...	808
1893	...	...	...	...	1,600
1894	...	...	...	...	405

The last figure is not quite correct, for a large herd was taken soon after our departure from Farøe.

It is interesting to note that the weights used in dividing the whales are the old Icelandic "skin," which is equal to about two hundred English pounds.

It is also worth observing that according to the monthly records kept of whales killed for the last century and a half, all the largest catches have been made in the months of July and August.

CHAPTER XIII.

HOMEWARD BOUND.

Qualities of the *Thyra*—Our fellow-passengers—My lady patients—A rough night—My Arctic fox and the sensation he created—A—"motherly" petrel—Icelandic emigrants disillusioned—Winner of a sweepstake—Arrival at Leith.

THE various reports we had received of the weather from up north had not prepared us for a very pleasant passage, but events proved it to be far worse than we had even expected. We steamed between the southern part of the Island of Stromö and Naalsö, and then altered our course for the open sea. As we encountered the full force of the wind from the nor'ard, we soon had an opportunity of finding out what sort of a sea-boat the *Thyra* was. In an hour we had nearly lost sight of the Islands,

and I think my last view of them was the rocks of Kolter and Hesto and the vague outline of the Island of Sandö, as we steamed away into the North Atlantic. Now that we had left the Islands we had leisure to examine our boat. Though smaller in tonnage and not so fast as the *Laura*, it was a treat to be on her after that wretched tank. The *Thyra*, although she rolled under the heavy seas sweeping in from the ocean, had none of the jolting and pitching motion of the former boat, and was one of the easiest and best-behaved vessels in a heavy sea on which we had ever travelled.

On going into the smoking-room we found that we had a very small sprinkling of Englishmen among the passengers, the majority being Icelandic merchants returning for the winter to Denmark. Amongst the Englishmen was the Rev. H. H. Slater, the well-known English ornithologist, who had been on a visit to Iceland to make notes of the birds of the northern districts. Another Englishman was one of the

reverend fathers from Oscott College, a most amusing man, whose stories kept us in a constant roar of laughter. Another passenger was the French Roman Catholic priest, returning from his visit to his one solitary co-religionist on the Faröes. With such congenial company we felt that our voyage, however rough, would not be at all dull. Luckily the captain had the forethought to have the ship's square sails set, which considerably steadied her, besides helping us on our way. Part of the cargo consisted of thirty Icelandic ponies, which occupied the whole of the fore-'tween decks. One felt rather sorry for these poor creatures during such a rough passage; but it was satisfactory to find that, being, apparently, like the rest of the inhabitants of their native island, sailors born, they stood it pretty well.

The lady passengers did not appear at dinner, and as I had been constituted ship's doctor I went down to pay them a visit. My prescription was a very acceptable one in the form of

dry champagne, and was so efficacious that towards evening some of my patients appeared on deck. In spite of the heavy sea, we were able to sit to a very late hour under the lee of the deck-houses, chatting and story-telling, in the starlight, till it was time to turn in. At one o'clock in the morning the ship began to pitch horribly, and hearing the noise of tramping on deck, I ran up to see whether anything unusual had taken place. The crew were reefing down topsails, and the boatswain and his mate were busy putting life-lines all round the sides of the deck, which precautions betokened that we expected very bad weather. Before half an hour was over my surmise had come true, for we took several heavy seas on board, and the mate, whose watch it was, told me that if the sea continued long like this, we should have to alter our course a point or two. This necessity luckily did not occur, although the next day showed no improvement in the weather.

Another item amongst our passengers, which must not be forgotten, was a couple of Arctic foxes, which were running about forrard amongst the ponies. These were the property of the mate, who had purchased them from some of the natives just before leaving Iceland. I was so taken with them that I at once bought the larger of them from him. To signify my possession he proceeded to tie a string round its neck, receiving in the process a variety of wounds about the hands, for which the sum paid appeared poor compensation. Master Reynard was now tethered to the lee rail, and a barrel was procured for him to crawl into. The rest of the passengers regarded me as the possessor of a "white elephant," for the animal showed no inclination to make friends with anybody. His former owner, however, seemed quite indifferent to any bites he might receive, and assisted me materially in my endeavours to tame him. During the whole of my return journey he was an object of unceasing interest

to the railway officials, and to everybody who had to do with him. His box was surrounded by an admiring crowd on several platforms. At Carlisle he escaped from his box in the luggage van, and I was fetched out of my compartment, where I was asleep, by the guard, who asked, "Would the gentleman who owns the wolf please come, as he is loose in the van and we cannot enter it or open the door?" After again securing him in his box by the aid of a railway carpenter, who happened to be on the platform with his bag of tools and who kindly nailed some extra strips across the box, we again started. At Rugby station he again was the cause of some commotion. A lady, who had taken it into her head that he was a guinea-pig, put her hand between the bars to stroke him, but hurriedly withdrew it with a serious abrasion, and she was hardly consoled by the remark of a porter, who remarked that it was "a very rough kind of guinea-pig the gentleman had got in that box." On my

arriving home the Mayoress of my native town, who is very fond of animals, very narrowly escaped a similar fate in trying to conciliate this denizen of the Arctic regions. I may say that since then his native ferocity has entirely left him, and under the name of "Dr. Nansen," he lies in our garden, the pet of everyone, and boldly disporting himself with the Newfoundland and other dogs. It is one of the prettiest sights possible to see him playing fearlessly with these large animals, over which he appears to have obtained quite an ascendancy. He is now tame and will come to call, allowing himself to be handled, and will take food from my hand.

One incident on the voyage amused me very much, and also the Rev. H. H. Slater. An Arctic tern, much exhausted, took refuge on the ship, and we placed it in one of the boats hanging on the davits to rest, so that on regaining strength it might fly away of its own free will. One of the lady passengers, who

happened to be on deck, evidently thinking that we had designs upon its life, interceded for it with the remark that its poor mother was no doubt looking for it and following the ship. The mother in question was an enormous fulmar petrel, perhaps looking out for it with anything but benevolent designs—rather contemplating a meal than any maternal attentions. Mr. Slater and myself were much amused at the suggestion that a fulmar petrel could be the parent of an Arctic tern.

But to return to the voyage—I cannot finish without a word or two of description of the last day and night on board the *Thyra*. On entering the Roost, which is the name given by the old Peterhead whalers to the Sound between Shetland and Orkney, we were once more sheltered from the fury of the sea, and our first sight of the British Islands was a signal for great excitement amongst the Icelandic emigrants, of whom we carried a good number in the fore part of the ship. Their

excitement was considerably damped by the aspect of the coast, which only slightly differed from what they had been accustomed to in their own island. Their expectations of a land teeming with fertility were certainly not realized by a view of the rocky shore of Scotland. Up to the time of their arrival at Leith they expressed nothing but disappointment. After leaving the Orkneys we never made land again till eleven at night, when we saw the flashing of the Kinnaird Head Light. It was a lovely night, though perfectly dark, and the ladies were all tempted by the calmness of the sea to sit on deck and watch the lights of the Scotch coast, which Lindsay, who was once more at home, was able to explain to them, as he knew every inch of this coast. Amongst them was the Scurdyness Light near Montrose, erected thirty years ago on account of the many wrecks that used to take place on this dangerous headland. We sat till we had seen the lights of Peterhead disappear into the

darkness, and heard Lindsay's many yarns connected with that dear old whaling place, now fast falling into disuse, and then we retired to bed. The next morning we were all up by daylight, as we expected to make the pier of Leith about ten o'clock. All the morning there was great excitement, for we had got up a sweepstake amongst the passengers as to the exact hour we should pass Inchkeith. This was won by a young lieutenant in the German army, who had been out in Iceland on a scientific commission for his Government. Lindsay came second, having only lost the prize by the short interval of five seconds, which greatly disappointed him, as he prided himself on being able to time the ship almost like a chronometer. A few hours after this we were in dock, and I was sadly shaking hands with all my fellow-passengers, with whom I was loth to part. On driving off, before turning a corner, the last glimpse I caught of the old *Thyra* showed my little Icelandic friend,

standing up in the bows, waving her handkerchief, and making a strange picture in her native dress among the more prosaic figures of the port of Leith.

CHAPTER XIV.

INFORMATION AND HINTS FOR TOURISTS.

Salubrity of the Islands and medical report—Chief attractions of Farøe—Cautions and hints—Farøese viands and produce—Absence of fruit—Notions of agriculture.

THIS account of our trip to the Farøe Islands will sufficiently show that it presented no very formidable difficulties or hardships. At the same time I should be sorry if my own enthusiasm enticed others to an undertaking which might prove a disappointment. Let me therefore in these concluding lines carefully weigh the pros and cons for the benefit of those who are always eagerly looking out for "fresh fields and pastures new."

As regards the great salubrity of the Islands, both in respect of the sea-breezes, which render

a stay on them almost an equivalent to an equal period actually spent at sea, and their wonderful immunity from almost all forms of disease, I venture to give one or two extracts from a letter of mine in the *Lancet* in October, 1894. “. . . Though the necessity of having somewhat to rough it would prevent medical men from recommending them [the Islands] to very delicate people, yet to those whose disorders are due to overwork or mental strain, the grandeur of the scenery, the superb sea air, giving as it does in this respect all the advantages that would be gained by a long sea voyage, and above all, the quiet, never troubled by any storm except one caused by the elements, might render a stay of a few months there a very useful restorative. The mean annual temperature is 45° F., that of the summer is 54°, and that of July 57·1°. The temperature is thus mild and equable, and though the climate is rather humid, my own experience from two visits is, that a visitor is

as likely, or even more so, to enjoy fair weather there during July and August as in the same period in Scotland. It is as well to observe that, although the air may be moist, it is the reverse of a rheumatic place, rheumatism and rheumatic fever being somewhat rare, and the latter when it occurs is seldom of a serious nature. . . .

“One of the terrors which all nervous people may experience in taking a pleasure trip to any part of the Continent—that of getting typhoid fever—may be absolutely discarded as regards these Islands, where, for a great many years, it has been quite stamped out. This is, perhaps, rather a curious fact when one sees how very careless the people are in many of the villages as to the sources of their water-supply, and their negligence with regard to the disposal of their refuse. No case of small-pox has occurred since the year 1856, but I must mention that vaccination is very rigorously carried out. Scarlet-fever, though not un-

known, is very rare, and of a mild type. Though the latest scourge of civilization, influenza, has reached there, in common with every region where man has penetrated (I was told by the whalers that even Greenland had not escaped), it does not appear to be of such a severe type as elsewhere, and it is not even mentioned as a source of increased mortality. Amongst the natives the great sources of death are pneumonia, pleurisy, and bronchitis, and this is little surprising considering the exposure which the calling of these islanders necessitates, and the difficulty in their small and not very commodious dwellings of properly drying their clothes. Diphtheria is very rare. No cases of leprosy have been seen since the middle of the eighteenth century. This struck me as very curious, as the diet of the natives is precisely the same as that of the Icelanders, who are great sufferers from this curse. It is also curious to note that hydatids, so prevalent in Iceland, are quite unknown, in

spite of the large number of sheep and dogs. Although of late years cases of tuberculosis have constantly cropped up, the doctor feels sure that he has traced them to the importation of Scotch and English beef, yet it has seldom been known to attack the lungs, and phthisis is almost unknown. Strumous affections are not uncommon, as would be expected when in-and-in breeding often occurs.

“Conjunctivitis, keratitis, and cataract in old age are very common; this is due, no doubt, to the exposure to the elements. There can be no question that these Islands on the whole enjoy a high state of salubrity. They are, moreover, amply provided with skilled medical attendants. Dr. Boeg, of Thorshavn, who resides there during the entire year, is a gentleman of unusual proficiency in every branch of his profession. His dexterity as an operating surgeon I had an opportunity of witnessing, and what he did I have never seen better done by anyone. He is thoroughly up to date in the

matter of antiseptics. The hospital of Thors-havn is the only one on the Islands, and though it contains but sixteen beds, the doctor tells me it is sufficient for his requirements.

“ . . . There are also several other medical men on the Islands, whose assistance can always be obtained by Dr. Boeg in cases of serious or major operations, he being in chief medical charge of the whole Islands.”

Though the sea journey to reach the Islands is double that which is required to reach the more accessible parts of Norway, yet it is only the smaller half of that which would be required to reach Iceland, and moreover it is generally in the latter half of that journey that the worst weather and sea are encountered. To those to whom the question of time and the terrors of the ocean are matters of indifference, I should at once admit that there is no comparison between the sport and objects of interest to be found in Iceland and in the Faröes ; but to get

about in Iceland involves an amount of wear and tear and rough travelling, to which many people would not be equal, though quite able to endure the minor inconveniences to be undergone in a trip to Faröe.

The principal attractions of the Faröes are most undoubtedly the scenery, which, except for the absence of trees, would afford a boundless scope for the artist, the walking and pony excursions, and also the boating. If boating is not undertaken except in decent weather, none of these excursions need occupy any great amount of time, or be attended with any kind of danger. The shooting incidental to them would not be of a highly exciting description, as may be seen in the descriptions of my own trips, but quite exciting enough to reward a sportsman for having brought his gun with him, as well as being an enjoyable way of supplementing the commissariat. I cannot lead any sportsman to suppose that ryper shooting, which would be a great attraction to these moors, will be per-

missible for years to come, for the stock of ryper, at no time very plentiful, is now so much reduced, and, for my part, I think that, besides protecting them, a renewal of the stock will be an absolute necessity. Should an opportunity offer, I have the fullest intention of helping in this matter, and any sportsmen who are in the way of procuring these birds alive, particularly in Iceland, whence their transport to these Islands offers no difficulty, would be conferring a great boon on the Faröese by sending them to Herr Müller. This veteran naturalist of Thorshavn was the original introducer of foreign ryper, through his son in Greenland, who forwarded him twenty birds, of which nineteen arrived alive and safely, and are the parents of most of the present small stock.

With regard to the fishing, which would probably be the chief object of these excursions, it is, as may be gathered from my narrative, of the highest excellence as far as trout-fishing

goes. As regards salmon-fishing it is doubtful whether there is any great chance of sport, but anyone with plenty of time might pursue his own investigations into this question.

It must hardly be taken for granted that shooting and fishing rights are absolutely free to all strangers and visitors. Being myself a guest of the Governor's, and having a recommendation from him (as also one to him from the Danish Minister in England), and being fortunate enough to have secured beforehand the friendship and companionship of two such well-known and highly respected inhabitants as Captain Andreassen and "Uncle," I had no occasion to do more than send a formal request for permission, which was in no case denied me, and I was made welcome everywhere. It is quite possible that for some time to come there will be so few visitors to the Islands that those who behave with courtesy to the officials, and condescend to ask permission of the natives, before trespassing on their properties or com-



THE STRFAM RUNNING THROUGH THORSHAVN.


[To face p. 253.]

menacing depredations on their fishing and shooting domains, will have no difficulty in getting, not only permission, but every assistance they may require. These people, though living in very humble circumstances in cottages, and some only in mere huts, are the actual owners of the land, and very tenacious of all their rights; but on the other hand they are thoroughly kind-hearted and hospitable, and even generous as far as their means will go. In the whole of my travels in different parts of the globe I have never been in any country where one could so safely count on the absolute honesty and good faith of every person one met with.

In order to have a pleasant excursion here it would be almost indispensable to do as I did myself, and have a tent built before starting, and I may here say that from Messrs. Edgington, of London Bridge, I have always been able to procure, on describing my wants, the exact article which carried out the idea submitted to

them. In this case they made me a Willesden Waterproof silk tent, eight feet square, with canvas floor, all in one, to fold up, with pole, and all in a bag only twenty-two inches long, and weighing under ten pounds. This tent sheltered two people and had the great advantage that it could be carried by the traveller himself, or even by a boy. However, the size and dimensions of the tent would have to be decided by the number of the party, and the limit of expense, not only as regards the cost of the tent, but of its transport on the scene of operations. Pack-ponies are not very easily obtainable, but could be arranged for by writing in advance, and the same remark applies to guides. Of course, there are a certain number of idle fishermen in Thorshavn who would be willing to hire themselves for any excursions; but it would be better to secure in advance some respectable and responsible inhabitant as a guide. With regard to the prospect of obtaining shelter and food at the houses of

merchants or farmers—this would be very greatly dependent on the character of the man the travellers had with them. From the circumstances before referred to, I was received and welcomed everywhere with boundless hospitality, and, except in the case of people whose means made me loth to intrude upon them, I hardly ever dared venture to offer any payment, as Captain Andreassen told me my hosts would feel insulted. No doubt, however, if the matter were treated with delicacy by a suitable guide, travellers might be put up at most of the villages, and some form of remuneration to their entertainers hit upon. In my own case I had fortunately taken out—not knowing how the land might lie—a very ample stock of tinned provisions of every kind, and was often able to replace what I had consumed, at some of the houses, with what was very useful to the people—a meal or two that they could hold in reserve for a rainy day when it might be wanted—cocoa, tea, and



chocolate have high value amongst the natives, and, with English tobacco, would almost pass as currency. Whilst on this question it would not be out of place to go a little into the subject of food. In an excursion it would certainly be unwise for even the hardiest of travellers to trust wholly to native food. Though fish can be had on the whole coast for catching it, it does not do to count on finding any ready caught, or anyone available at a moment's notice to catch it for you. Therefore travellers would do well to be provided with extra strong and extra long fishing tackle, as the water is generally deep. Bait is not required if hooks with brightened sinkers attached to the shaft (such as the natives use) are taken, the fish here seeming only too anxious to be caught on the slightest provocation.

When I started from England I expected that the fish would run to some size, so I provided myself with the stoutest sea line I could get in Leith, which was as thick as three

salmon lines, with hooks, and other gear in proportion. My disgust can be better imagined than described when on producing them in Farøe just before starting, I was told by the fisherman who looked at them that they were only fit for "ooret" (trout), and that I must buy a *sea line*! So, off I was marched to the nearest store, from which I emerged with a coil of young rope, a lead of about six pounds, three or four gaff hooks tied on to thick cord, and a curious-looking bait formed of lead to counterfeit a herring, I suppose, for it was about that size and bristled with hooks. This last much resembled an implement often used by poachers for stroke-hauling salmon in low water in the pools on English rivers, and is worked by letting it down to the bottom and then lifting it up with a sharp snatch about three feet, then letting it go again, and so on, this process being continued till a fish is struck. It seemed an excellent bait, for I got all sorts and conditions of fish on it.

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1. The first step in making a good
2. choice is to decide on your basic
3. needs and a potential supply.
4. The second step is to find out how
5. to get the most out of the supply.

names of the various fish that so greatly abound, but unfortunately my knowledge of fish is merely that of a sportsman. I fear, indeed, that my state of mind as regards fishes was not in any way more praiseworthy than the attitude of my good friend Lindsay towards birds. Eliminating cormorants and fulmars as utterly inedible among the aquatic species, and admitting crows on land to be poor eating, all else was fowl that came to his net. Sea-birds, it is true, he divided into five classes, looms, sea-gulls, snowbirds, burgomasters, and ducks ; but land-birds, other than crows, were to him simply birds and nothing more. He never could be induced to acknowledge that my devotion to ornithology was of any practical value, and perhaps from his own point of view he may have been right.

Halibut we both knew, and all smaller flat fish we rather assumed might be immature and differently marked varieties of the same genus. Of other species, the cod was the only one that

we recognized, and the smaller sorts did not appear to us to possess any such peculiar characteristics as to prevent our coming to the same conclusion with regard to them as we had done with the halibut and other flat fish.

Few people will care to eat the dry sheep and whale meat, the staple food of the inhabitants, both of which, to use the mildest expression, are rather strong—in fact the natives' estimate of the flavour of mutton is exactly the reverse of ours. A farmer, in inviting me to partake of some, laid great stress on the fact that the dish before me was the strongest sheep he had had the pleasure of eating for many a long year—a fact which my nose had fully assured me of as soon as I entered the house, and, in spite of a hearty appetite, I found great difficulty in satisfying the requirements of politeness, all appetite having been destroyed by the smell.

Whale meat, having the flavour of sweet

stringy beef, or perhaps I should say of horse, is eatable when one is put to it, but not otherwise. The bread is composed mostly of rye and oat flour mixed, and mostly home-grown, made into unleavened cakes, about ten inches long by three inches deep. It is, as a rule, baked every night over the turf fires. These cakes are called in Faröese "drylur." They are not bad eating when one day old, in spite of the darkness of their colour, which is deeper than the black bread of Germany, and they will keep for days, though they are nicest when only one or two days old.

The natives eat all sea-fowl indiscriminately, their favourite being gulls, a taste which they share with the Northumbrian fishermen. They are even able to relish fulmar, petrels, and cormorants, a feat almost beyond the powers of any but themselves. They are, however, wise enough to indulge in the milder kind of birds, such as gulls, whimbrél, and oyster-catchers.

The latter are excellent eating and not too unpleasantly fishy. It is the one bird of its class that even the most fastidious could eat, and I myself enjoyed them and the whimbrel immensely. As to the ducks, they are all edible, but too fishy for most tastes, including those which abound among, and may be purchased in, most villages. People who have been accustomed to the flavour of eggs and poultry on the coast of Scotland, where the birds have access to fish refuse, will not be surprised to hear that they all, without exception, have a fishy flavour in Faröe. Here, however, it is much more marked, hens' eggs being hardly distinguishable from gulls' eggs, which I often ate, and which still retained their flavour, although they had been laid down some weeks in lime. Most of the inhabitants keep a large store of eggs for winter use. An omelette of black-backed gulls' eggs would certainly, in one sense, be appropriately called "savory."

Milk, either of sheep or cows, can be procured anywhere, as also butter, and both are good. With regard to cheese, it is most excellent, being mild and of delicate flavour. It resembles Camembert, Neufchatel, and many of the best small kinds of French cheese, but they are mostly about six pounds in weight. The best of all comes from the Stor Diamond Island, and is very hard to procure because most of it is consumed in the Island itself. At the table of the Governor and a few of the leading officials this cheese was generally to be found. Despite the fact that the bill of fare of these islanders is not very extensive, they know, at all events, how to make the best of it. They are excellent cooks and very clean in all their arrangements, though most of their cooking has to be done over a turf fire. Some of their fish soups are decidedly good.

I was rather disappointed at not finding lobsters, crabs, or oysters, or, in fact, any shell-

fish. My hopes with regard to the oysters were raised by having seen at dinner some scallop-shells, which I hoped might contain some kind of bivalve. It turned out, however, they were full of macaroni in white sauce, thickened with grated stock-fish, with bread-crumbs over the top—by no means a bad imitation of oysters, and I should advise some of my readers to try the recipe. Fish pies, much as they are made in Cornwall, with cream and eggs, seemed a favourite dish, and one we greatly appreciated, whilst flat fish, fried with grated cheese over them, was also a surprise to me so far north.

One drawback to these Islands, which I cannot think the climate sufficiently accounts for, is the total absence of any kind of fruit. I cannot see why raspberries, or the hardier kind of strawberries, or, perhaps, some other of our more robust fruits should not be got to grow there. The deficiency is made up in a mild

way by the presence of some fairly edible berries found on the mountains, but I cannot remember seeing any of the natives, even the children, attempt to eat them.

With regard to all garden produce the ideas of the people seem to be very primitive, potatoes and cabbages, with lettuces in the Governor's garden, being about the only vegetables I ever saw growing. Their notions of agriculture, even to one like myself, who can lay no claim to be anything of a farmer, appeared of the most pernicious description. If they once started oats or potatoes in any field, that field became an oat or a potato field, as the case might be, apparently for all time. In fact their principal argument in favour of such a procedure was that their fathers or grandfathers had grown potatoes in that field, and it would be almost disrespectful to their ancestors to suggest that they had not made the best possible selection of soil and position for the growth of such and

such a crop. I am afraid the produce of agriculture must needs be poor in any case, but surely some improvement might be made if the people would condescend to learn—"but they wouldn't."

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